

1839

The Young Lady's Aid to Usefulness and Happiness (Part One)

Jason Whitman

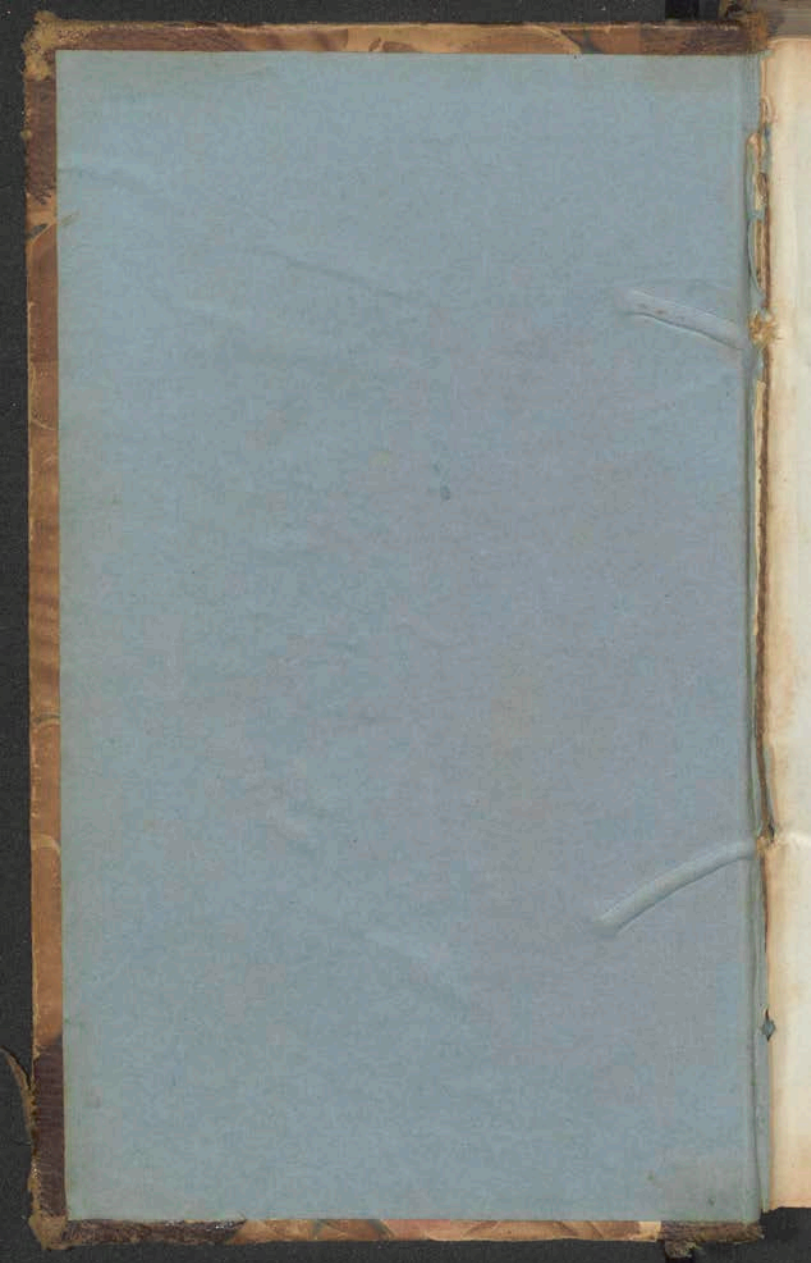
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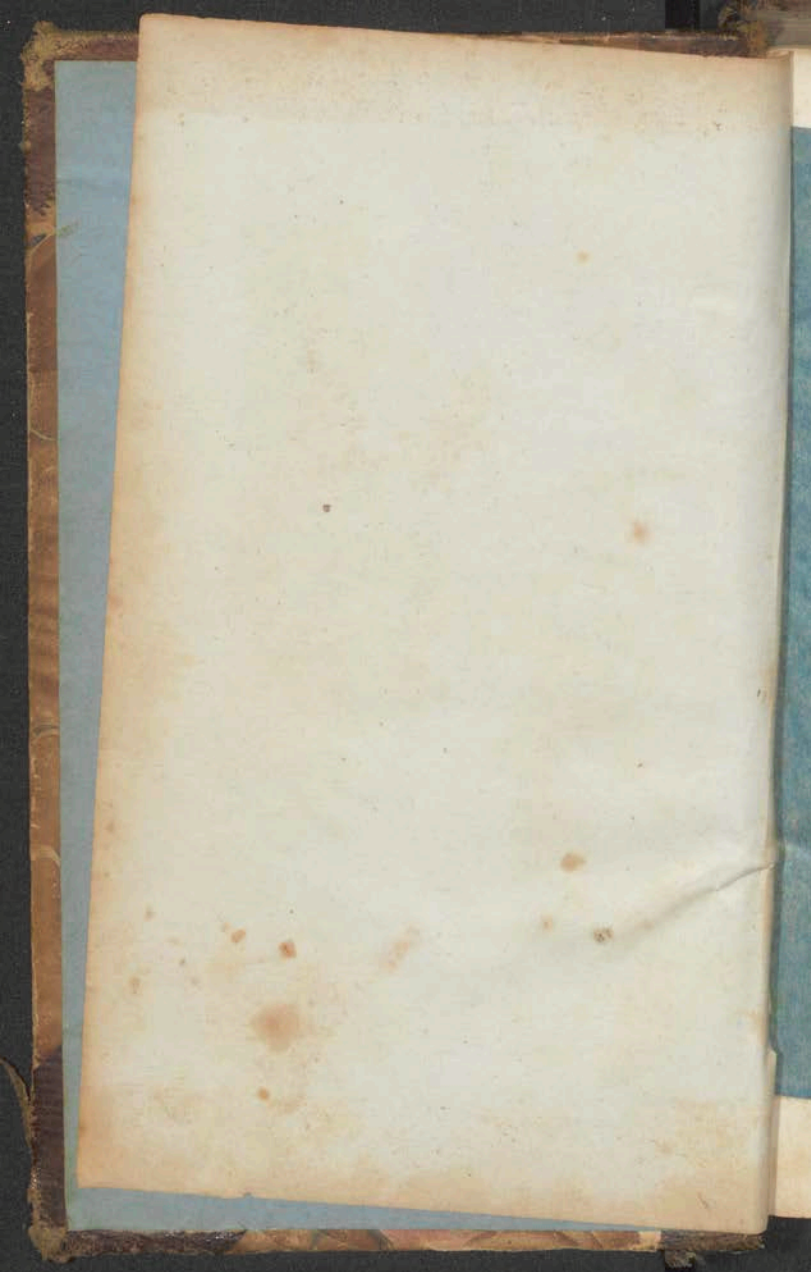
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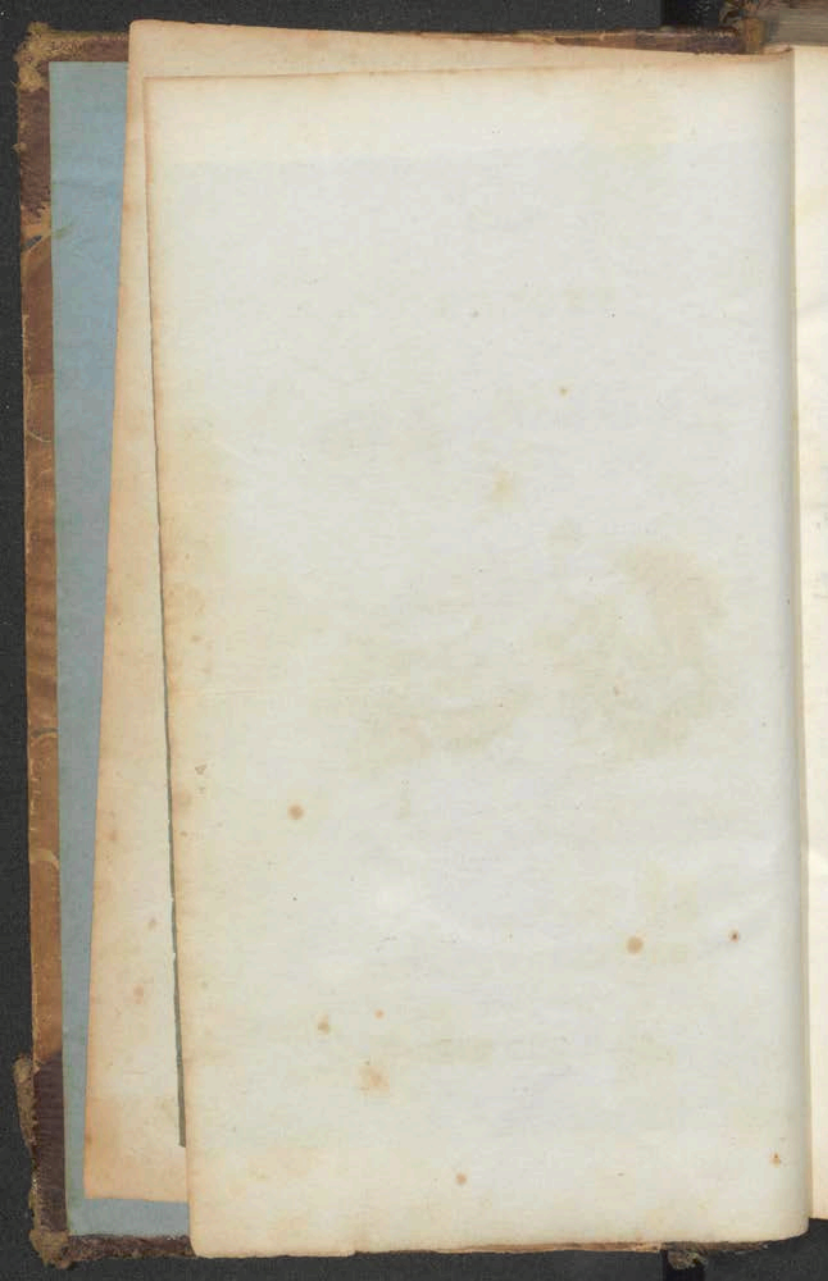


THE
YOUNG
LADY'S AID.



Read, not to contradict and confute, nor to believe
and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, —
but to weigh and consider. Bacon.

PORTLAND:
S.H. COLLESWORTHY.
BOSTON:
B.H. CRILEY.



THE
YOUNG LADY'S AID,

TO
USEFULNESS AND HAPPINESS.

BY JASON WHITMAN,
AUTHOR OF THE YOUNG MAN'S ASSISTANT,

SECOND EDITION,
IMPROVED AND ENLARGED.



PORTLAND:
S. H. COLESWORTHY.
1839.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1838,

BY S. H. COLESWORTHY,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of Maine.

RUFUS TUKEY, PRINTER,
NO. 23, EXCHANGE STREET.



TO
THE YOUNG LADIES
OF
THE PARK-STREET PARISH,
PORTLAND, MAINE,
THIS LITTLE VOLUME,
ORIGINALLY PREPARED FOR THEIR GOOD,
AND IN THE FORM OF
LECTURES,
DELIVERED IN THEIR PRESENCE IS
AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED
BY THEIR
FRIEND AND PASTOR.

1838,

Maine.

TO THE YOUNG LADIES

THE PARK-STREET PARISH

OF THE CITY OF BOSTON

THIS LITTLE YOUNG LADY

ORIGINALLY PREPARED FOR THEIR GOOD

AND IN THE FORM OF

LECTURES

ARRANGED BY THE PARISH

INDICATED

BY THE

WRIGHT AND PASTOR

PREFACE.

I am aware, that it may seem to be the very height of presumption, to bring forward a work addressed to young ladies, after the excellent volumes of Mrs. Sigourney and Mrs. Farrar. But I have ever felt that the multiplication of books of this character is productive of good rather than of evil. My reasons are these. Every writer has his own way of stating things, his peculiar mode of address, his individual style of writing. Then, too, the tastes of readers differ widely. What is dull to one, may be interesting to another. There is hope, therefore, that if books are multiplied, and the subjects are presented in different modes and styles, a greater variety of tastes will be suited, and a greater number of readers will be interested. Then, too, it is often the case, that a book is read with interest, on account of the acquaintance, which the reader may have with the writer. Every one has his circle of friends and acquaintances, within which, what he may say will be eagerly read and particularly regarded. I would cherish the hope, therefore, that this little volume

may find readers, and may exert an influence among the friends and acquaintances of the writer, and with those whose tastes may be suited, by his particular mode of address, notwithstanding there may be other and better books of a similar character already before the public.

This volume was originally prepared, as has been already hinted, in the form of lectures.—The occasion of preparing them was simply this. In the regular discharge of my professional duties, I addressed a course of lectures to the young men of my parish. It was hinted by a respected female friend, that, a similar course, addressed to young ladies, would be acceptable and might be the means of some good. The suggestion was accepted and acted upon. The lectures were given on the afternoons of six successive Sabbaths. They were very fully attended, by young ladies from most of the religious societies in the city and were listened to with great apparent interest. It has been suggested to me that by publishing them they might be instrumental of more extended good.

In regard to the matter and the style of these letters, I simply say, that I have touched upon those topics, which have presented themselves most forcibly to my own mind, as the topics upon which counsel and advice were most needed, and that I have written straight on, just as thoughts,

examples and illustrations have occurred, laboring only to be understood and felt, and not thinking whether I should subject myself to censure or secure to myself praise.

I now commend this little book to the public, to whose good opinion I am not indifferent, and in whose approbation of my efforts I should rejoice. I commend it especially to that interesting and most important class of the community, to whom it is more particularly addressed—the young ladies—with the hope that it may be to them truly and in reality what it is nominally, an *aid to usefulness and happiness*. But above all would I commend this effort to our heavenly Father, with the prayer, that he would accept and bless whatever in it may be in accordance with his will, and forgive what in it may not meet with his approval.

JASON WHITMAN.

THE
YOUNG LADY'S AID.

LETTER I.

THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY UPON THE
CONDITION OF FEMALES.

Introductory remarks—the condition of females in savage lands—in those semi-civilized—in Christian lands—reasons for instituting this comparison—Counsels and advice should be adapted to the condition in which women are to be placed; Christianity regards woman as an individual spiritual being before God—dependent upon and accountable to him—This the essential distinction and the essential relation—This thought will fill woman with self-respect—It will lead her to such courses of conduct and such pursuits of study as will render her worthy of the respect of others.

MY YOUNG FRIENDS:—

The peculiar situations in which I have been placed in life, as a teacher, with young

ladies under my instruction, and, then, as a minister of the gospel, have afforded me opportunities for observing the peculiar dangers to which you are exposed; and have excited within me deep feelings of interest in your welfare. I have, for a long time wished to see you aiming more constantly at usefulness, in the highest and best sense of that term, as the direct road to happiness. And I have felt desirous of doing what little might be in my power, to aid you in your endeavors to become useful and happy. I have, therefore, determined to address you in a series of letters. I shall not speak as an admirer of female beauty and female charms, and fill my letters with fulsome flattery. The deep and heartfelt respect which I entertain for you, forbids it. Nor shall I speak to you, simply as a christian minister, in the measured stiffness of official dignity, authority or reserve. No my friends, I desire to lay aside every thing which may prevent my speaking to you with the same freedom, directness and particularity, with which I should address an own and much loved sister. And I wish you to regard the sugges-

tions, which I may offer, not merely as the cold dictates of official duty, but as the warmer promptings of fraternal affection. I would approach you as a brother—I would speak to you as to sisters. But, while I would lay aside my official character, I cannot forget my christian solitudes. While I would speak to you as a brother, I beg you to bear it in mind, that it is as a christian brother that I speak;—for, if christianity be regarded as the living and eternal truth of God, and be allowed to reach the heart, it will affect our feelings, most deeply and distinctly, in regard to those who are near and dear to us. Does the christian pray for the salvation of heathen nations? And does he not pray, with tenfold more earnestness for the salvation of those near and dear to him—of parents, brothers, sisters, wife, children? You will not, then, think it strange that, in speaking to you as a brother, I may suffer myself to be controlled by my christian solicitude for your spiritual good.

I have thus, my young friends, introduced myself to your acquaintance, and explained to you the feelings, desires and intentions, with

which I commenced this series of letters ; and now, I would ask you to pause and look at yourselves, to consider carefully the peculiarities of the situation in which you are placed, to inquire for the causes which have produced these peculiarities, and for the duties which spring from them. And you will be the better enabled to do this, if you will first inquire into the situation of females in other times and other lands. As you pursue this inquiry, you will find, that, in many nations, woman has been regarded as the slave or the play thing of man; you will find too, that in some nations, she is even now so regarded. Among savage nations, woman is in reality only a slave. She must bear burdens, and endure fatigues in obedience to her lord and master, the husband. The husband will pass his days in sport or idleness, while the wife is employed in hard and wearing labor. Among such nations, man seems to look upon woman as created for him, for his use and pleasure. Such is the condition of woman among savage nations.

There are other nations, more nearly civilized, where the condition of woman is differ-

ent, where she is suffered to live in comparative idleness, where she is gaily decked out and fondly caressed. But among these she is regarded as a mere toy or play thing. Like the child's doll, she may be carefully preserved and beautifully adorned, but still preserved and adorned, only as a doll, only as a gilded play thing, which may serve as a source of temporary pleasure. Such is the condition of woman in some lands? she lives, and adorns her person, and cultivates her charms that so she may be the more acceptable as a toy, or may the more readily excite the passions she must gratify. Then there are other lands, like our own, which are civilized and christianized, and what is the condition of woman in these? Here, she is regarded, not as the slave, not as the play thing, but as the equal and companion of man. Man looks to her, not merely for service, not solely for pleasure. He looks to her for sympathy and counsel. He does not command her as a superior but speaks to her as to an equal. Is the husband in indigent circumstances? He does, indeed, expect the wife to struggle with him against the evils

of poverty. And he hopes to be himself animated to still more resolute exertions, by the cheerfulness and resolution with which she may struggle. Is the husband rich? He expects to find, in the wife, one who will counsel and advise, in regard to the best mode of employing the riches which God has bestowed; one, who will aid him in doing good according to the extent of his means. Is man placed on a bed of sickness? The attentions of none are so soothing as those of woman, those of a mother, a daughter, a sister, or a wife. At such times man looks to woman not merely as an equal, but as a superior. He is almost inclined to regard her as an 'angel of mercy,' at least as a 'sister of charity,' and superior to himself in her capacity for charitable deeds.

But why, you may ask, is it necessary or important to bring these different conditions of woman into view by way of contrast? I answer, that counsel and advice, in order to be appropriate and useful, should be adapted to the condition of those to whom it is addressed. If woman is to be the slave of man, to perform labors and bear burdens at his command, then

she should prepare herself, while young, for her future labors by such a course of exercise and effort, as will produce physical development and bodily strength. Under such circumstances and with such prospects the counsels and advice given should have principal reference to this point. So, too, if woman is to be the mere toy and play thing of man, living only to afford him pleasure, or to gratify his passions, then should she qualify herself for this condition by seeking in early years an acquaintance with those arts and personal embellishments, which are calculated to make her a more accomplished and acceptable toy. Under such circumstances and with such prospects, the counsels given should have reference to this kind of preparation. But if woman is to be the equal, the companion, the counsellor of man, then should her early education and training have reference to these peculiarities in her condition. And, where man is enlightened and refined, there must woman also be enlightened and refined, that she may be truly equal and capable of companionship. You will perceive, at once, that, in the latter

case, the education necessary will be more various, extensive and difficult, than in the former. In the former cases, man seeks the company of woman only at particular times, when he wishes for her labor and service, or when he would amuse himself with her as a toy. But, in the latter case, there is no state of mind, in which man does not seek the society of woman. Does he rejoice? He would share his joys with some beloved female. Does he weep? His tears are wiped away by the delicate hand of a mother, or a daughter, a sister or a wife. Is the husband in doubt, in perplexity, in distress? Does he not go to the wife of his bosom for advice, for counsel, for sympathy, for encouragement? Consequently, woman should be prepared to meet all these various calls. The mind, then, should be informed and the judgment matured, that she may be qualified to give counsel. The sympathies should be awakened, the feelings cultivated and the affections trained, that so she may enter into the feelings, draw forth the sympathies, and enlist the affections of those she would counsel; that so she may

come to man, not as a superior being to reprove or instruct merely, but as an equal, to share with him his various fortunes. And then, too, the energies should be aroused and developed, that so she may be herself enabled to bear up cheerfully and to cheer and encourage her companion under trial and difficulty. Such, I say, should be the early training of one, who is to be the companion and counsellor of educated and enlightened man. How various, how extensive, how difficult the task. I have alluded, then, to these differences in the condition of woman, in order that you may understand the reason and the object of my counsels. For it will be my endeavor to give such, as are calculated to prepare you for the peculiar circumstances of your future condition; such as are calculated to prepare you to be in reality and truly the companions and counsellors of man. I have alluded to these differences in the condition of woman for another reason; I wish you to understand the principle involved in this difference, to know, not merely that there is a difference, but why this difference exists; the causes which have produced it. And

on this point, I would observe, that, upon examination, you will find that there is a marked and striking difference between the condition of woman in christian and unchristian lands. There may be, and there undoubtedly are, great differences in the condition of woman in lands not christian. In some they may be more elevated than in others. So too there may be, and there undoubtedly is a great diversity in the condition of woman in different christian lands. In some they may be more degraded than in others. But these are only differences in modes and degrees; they are not differences in principle. Between christian lands and those not christian the difference is one of principle. And what is this difference of principle? It is this. In lands not christian woman is regarded only as an appendage of man, as created for his use and pleasure. The estimation in which she is held, and the condition in which she is placed, depend only upon the different opinions, which may prevail in regard to her appropriate sphere, either as a servant of labor or as a minister of pleasure. She is not regarded as

an independent individual creation, of intrinsic worth in herself; but simply as an appendage of man, living, laboring, studying the arts of pleasing with a view to the service, or to the gratification of man. Such is the peculiarity of the prevalent opinions in regard to woman in lands not christian. There may be slight differences in the mode in which she is treated. The savage may make woman but a substitute for a beast of burden. The Turk, with his seraglio, may regard her as a toy, valuable indeed, but still a toy. But the principle with both is the same. They both regard woman as the appendage of man. In christian lands the case is far different.—Christianity addresses woman as an individual, a spiritual being, possessing powers, and capacities, involved in responsibilities, capable of happiness; a being of real, intrinsic and eternal worth, in herself, and without dependence upon man. Christianity connects woman directly with the throne of God, and teaches that she is no more to be regarded as an appendage of man than man is to be regarded as an appendage of woman. Christianity does

indeed recognize the relations, in which woman is placed. It regards her as sustaining to man the relation of daughter, sister, wife and mother; and enforces, with sanctions the most solemn, the obligations and duties of these relations. But she places man and woman on an equality before God. If she says to wives 'submit yourselves to your own husbands,' she is only pointing out a duty, which springs from a peculiar relation. She does not say woman submit to man. She only says, having entered a peculiar relation in which it is necessary that there should be one and only one head, you must yield all proper submission to this head. This then is the principle, the peculiarity of the view, with which woman is regarded and addressed by christianity. She is addressed as an individual immortal spirit, looking not to man, but to God, as the being with whom she is directly connected, and for whose service and glory she was created.

Indeed Christianity looks upon us all, in one and the same light, as individual spirits before God, dependent upon, and accountable to

him. But, at the same time, it regards us as spirits, sustaining towards each other certain relations, out of which grow certain duties, by the faithful performance of which our mutual improvement may be promoted and our mutual happiness secured. It speaks to us all, I repeat, as individual spirits before God, dependent upon, and accountable to him. This is the one unchangeable view, which christianity takes of us, and it teaches us that this is the one unchangeable view which we should take of ourselves. The relations of life may vary, the circumstances and condition of our being may vary, but this peculiarity, that we are spiritual beings, and this relation to God, as dependent and accountable beings, must always remain.

And this is the view, my young friends, which christianity takes of you. It regards you as individual, immortal spirits before God, his children, dependent upon, and accountable to him. It has seen you children, it now sees you young ladies, it may hereafter see you wives and mothers, it follows you through all these relations, as immortal spirits. With every

variation in your relations, your duties will vary. But you will retain through them all your essential characteristic, as immortal spirits, your essential relation as dependent upon and accountable to God. And so too, christianity may follow you through the various changes of life. It may see you in circumstances of wealth, or in those of poverty, in the enjoyment of bodily health, or visited by bodily disease; as the mistress of your mansion, or as domestics in the same. But in all these variations of condition and circumstance, it looks upon you as still immortal spirits, and regards all these variations as the means appointed by God for the growth, development and improvement of the spirit. And now my young friends I wish you would look upon yourselves in this light. Ever regard yourselves as immortal spirits before God, capable of spiritual improvement and spiritual happiness, as dependent upon and accountable to him.—Ever regard all the relations, all the circumstances, all the duties, and all the trials of life, but as so many temporary arrangements, appointed by God for your spiritual improve-

ment. Fix your thoughts then not upon these temporary arrangements, but upon your essential characteristic, your essential relation.—

I have thus pointed out what I regard as the foundation of the peculiar condition of woman in christian lands. The more fully these views are brought home to the feelings, the more will woman be elevated and refined; the more will she be respected and esteemed; the more fully will she become the companion and the counsellor of man. But why so, you will ask?

I answer, that woman will learn, from this view to respect and value herself, and to base her self-respect upon right grounds. She will respect herself for what she is, as created by God, for her intellectual, moral and spiritual capacities. She will respect herself, on account of the relation which she sustains to the all perfect Jehovah, as his child. She will respect herself on account of the glorious destiny which is before her, an eternal and spiritual life beyond the grave. She will look, with deep and heartfelt reverence upon that nature, which comes from the hands of God, which is capable of loving and serving and

holding communion with God, and which, if through the power of christian truth and the influences of God's spirit it be developed aright, is to enjoy eternal blessedness in the presence of God and the Savior, in company with holy angels and the spirits of the just made perfect. And this her self-respect, based as it will be upon these grounds, will exert an influence upon all her tastes, upon all her pursuits, upon her whole character. Will she, who feels that she is a spiritual being, dependent upon, accountable to God, destined to an eternal, spiritual life beyond the grave, will such a one, I ask, have a taste for vanity and frivolity? And will such a one spend her time in studying and arranging the various forms of dress, the various rules and laws of fashion, to the neglect of her spiritual cultivation, to the forgetfulness of her eternal destiny? Will she not, on the contrary, be carried by her very self-respect, and by the tastes naturally springing from that self-respect, to pursuits more solid and substantial? Will such a one strive solely to please man, will she not strive principally to please God. Most surely she will.

And, under the influence of these views, her very tastes will lead her to those pursuits and studies, which are solid and substantial and which give stability to character and secure respect. Thus you perceive, that, if woman looks upon herself, through the medium of christianity, she will be almost necessarily and unavoidably led to seek for such acquisitions and to pursue such courses of conduct, as will render her worthy of respect. But, still further, man will regard woman with greater respect and will treat her with greater reverence, when he looks upon her through the christian medium. He will see in her, not a mere play thing, not a mere slave, but an immortal soul, capable of indefinite progress in spiritual improvement. He will reverence her for what she is, and is capable of becoming. His reverence for her spiritual nature will exert a powerful influence upon his manner of treating her.—Will one, who regards woman as an immortal spirit, subject her to all the labors and endurances of a beast of burden? Oh, no. Will he consent that she should be a mere slave? Most surely not. Will he treat her only as a

toy, for occasional trifling and amusement, or regard her only as the means of gratifying passions? It cannot be. His reverence for her essential characteristic and her essential relation will forbid it. He may see woman debased, degraded, and, in the greatest degree, loathsome in her appearance, or he may see her the most light and trifling of creation, decked out in all the gaudy display of worthless finery. But his feelings will, in both cases, and in all similar cases, be only those of pity. He may mourn over her perversion of her high capacities. But he will still be filled with the deepest respect for the tendencies of her nature. He will strive to reclaim her, to save her, to bring her back from her degradation and folly to a correct view of her immortal relations. You perceive, therefore, that the light, in which christianity presents woman, is well calculated, not only to fill woman herself with self-respect, and to lead her to acquisitions and pursuits which will secure the respect of others, but that it is well calculated to cause man to look upon her with deep and heartfelt reverence, for the native tendencies

of her soul. You see then, my young friends, how it is and why it is, that in christian lands the condition of woman is so far elevated above what it is in lands where the sun of righteousness has never dawned.

You have now seen, young ladies, what christianity has done for you. It has set you free from the degrading idea that you are the mere appendages of man, created for his service and bound to make it the object of your life to please him. It has placed you on a level with every other human being, as immortal spirits, bound most closely to the throne of the everlasting Jehovah, standing side by side with your fellow beings, not subjected to them, but on an equality with them, sustaining to them certain relations, out of which grow certain duties. It has raised you from the condition of slaves or play things to that of friends, counsellors and supporters of your fellow beings. It may be that, your father or guardian may make no pretensions to personal religion. Still, I say, that it is to christianity that you are indebted for most of your peculiar privileges. Your father or your guardian,

if not devoted personal christians themselves, live in a christian land, in christian society and under the splendors of the noonday rays of the sun of righteousness. He cannot divest himself of the influences by which he is ever surrounded, and which press upon him from all sides, like the pressure of the atmosphere upon his body. He cannot go counter to the practices which every where prevail, and which, with most, are all powerful. If, then, your father or your guardian be not himself a devoted personal christian, still he gives you a christian education, he treats you with christian kindness. And so of all around you.— They treat you with christian respect. For they are subjected to the general influences of christianity, which are every where around. You perceive then, I repeat, what christianity has done for you. It has revealed you to yourselves and excited within you feelings of self-respect. It has shed a light upon your natures, which has caused you to be respected and revered by others. I do not mean that christianity has actually done all this, in every instance. But I do mean that, wher-

ever its full power is felt and its true spirit has been imbibed, it has done this. I do mean that, the more fully you may yourselves feel the power of christianity upon your hearts, the more will you respect and reverence yourselves; the more careful will you be, in all your pursuits, to select those which are solid, substantial and improving; and consequently the more worthy will you become of the respect and esteem of others. I do mean, still further, that the more fully the power of christian truth is felt in the community, and the more entirely the spirit of christianity prevails, the greater will be the respect and kindness, with which woman will be treated. You see then, I repeat still again, what christianity has done for you. Nay more, you can, at the same time, perceive what she is capable of doing for you, if you will but yield to her claims, and her influences.

LETTER II.

THE REQUIREMENTS OF CHRISTIANITY AT THE HAND OF FEMALES.

Recapitulation of the topics of the preceding letter—

The general subject of this and the succeeding letters stated—Christianity makes two requests—that we should become ourselves truly christian—and strive to make others truly christian—She asks, particularly that all should give her their hearts—This request in accordance with our natures—If the affections are not fixed upon some worthy object, they will fasten themselves upon what is unworthy—if they are not directed to some engrossing object, the individual may become listless and unhappy—The difference between ladies and gentlemen in this respect—Christianity asks in the second place, that her votaries should engage in a course of moral and religious self-cultivation—This illustrated—the cultivation of amiability of disposition—The cultivation of contentedness of feeling—The mistake that the various qualities of a religious character are the result of natural disposition or of special influence corrected—The mistake that we should wait to be irresistibly moved to become religious, corrected—The importance of beginning immediately and of cherishing the slightest serious impressions urged—conclusion.

MY YOUNG FRIENDS:

In my last letter, I endeavored to awaken you to a full view of what christianity had done for you. And especially, I endeavored to point out to you the light, in which she has revealed you to yourselves; as marked by the essential characteristic of immortal spirits, as sustaining the essential relation of dependence upon and accountability to God. I endeavored also to point out to you the influence, which this view might be expected to have, and which it ought to have upon your own feelings and pursuits, and upon the esteem in which you might be held by man and the treatment which you might receive at his hands.

In this letter I shall speak directly and particularly of what christianity requires of you. And my first remark is, that christianity makes two distinct general requests of each one of you. In the first place, she asks that you would, each one of you, fashion your own characters upon her model, and would strive to bring yourselves, in all respects, into a conformity with her principles and her spirit. In the second place, she asks that you would each of

you, in your own appropriate spheres, and in the way most becoming and proper, exert your influence to promote the increased power, and the wider spread of these same principles, the more universal prevalence of this spirit. Do you ask how you can best meet and comply with these requisitions? how you can yourselves become truly christian, and how you can exert an influence to make others truly christian?— I answer, that it will be my object, in this series of letters, to point out more particularly the way in which you can comply with these two general requisitions of christianity.

And, first, I remark that christianity asks, more particularly, that you should give her your hearts. She regards you, as possessing the purest and most ardent affections. But she sees you in danger of ruin, social, intellectual and moral ruin, through the instrumentality of these very affections, for she sees them in danger of being perverted, of becoming depraved. She is unwilling that they should be fastened supremely upon any thing, other than the highest, purest and holiest objects. She is unwilling that you should set your affections supreme-

ly upon social enjoyment, upon intellectual cultivation, or even upon mere moral improvement. She would not have you disregard these things. But she would have you regard spiritual or religious improvement, as the one great object of life? she would have you set your affections upon the spiritual enjoyments of another world, as the supreme object of desire, the great end to be sought. Having directed the attention to these, religious improvement in this life, and to religious enjoyment in the world to come, and fixed the affections upon them, as the end of desire and of effort, she teaches that social, intellectual and moral improvement and enjoyment are to be sought, as subsidiary to and instrumental of spiritual progress. Religious or spiritual improvement, then, should be the one grand, all-absorbing object of desire and effort. All else is to be viewed as subsidiary to this, all else is to be estimated by the character of its influence upon this; upon religious or spiritual improvement, upon a right preparation for the enjoyment of religious or spiritual happiness beyond the grave. Christianity permits you to love all things which are pure and innocent,

in different degrees, according to their different degrees of real worth. But she asks that you should love her and the objects which she presents to your notice, with all the strength of your most ardent affections. She asks that you would give her your hearts, that you would give her yourselves, yield yourselves up to be moulded and fashioned in all your habits of thought, feeling and desire, in all your words and actions, by her instructions. She asks that you would love her supremely and serve her devotedly. Such, my young friends, is the first request of christianity, at your hands. She will accept of no partial devotion, of no divided affections. To become, in all respects, what christianity requires you to be, must be, with each one of you, the supreme object of desire and of effort.

And this request is reasonable. It is in accordance with the demands of your own natures. For, unless the affections become engrossingly fixed upon some worthy object, there is great danger that they will either attach themselves to some inferior and unworthy object, perhaps even to what is absurd and ridiculous,

or will wither away, leaving the individual to become entirely and disgustingly selfish. Have there not been, I ask, ladies, who, to all human appearances, have become entirely absorbed in their devotion to a lap dog, manifesting an almost maternal anxiety for its comfort, spending much of that most precious of all earthly possessions, time, in childish watching and tending the animal? And yet these claimed to be Ladies, possessed of immortal spirits, of heaven born affections! Ladies, possessed of reason and conscience! Must not every one exclaim, at the sight, at the very thought of such a person, oh how perverted, how debased her affections! I have taken an extreme case. But it shows the tendency of the affections of the human heart, if not directed to elevated and worthy objects, to descend and fasten themselves upon those which are low and unworthy.

Nor am I certain that there are not many corresponding cases in female society. Is it not often the case, that ladies, and young ladies in particular, permit their affections to become fixed upon the vanities of dress and fashion? Is it not sometimes the case that they are rendered

miserably unhappy, if their dress be not as gay, or as rich or as fashionable as the dresses of their companions? Is it not the case that young ladies sometimes permit their thoughts to be engrossed and their affections absorbed in the ceremonies of a party or the attentions of the beaux, so much so, that they can scarcely speak, think, or dream of any thing else? And to what is this owing, but to the absence of some higher and holier object of affection. Christianity does not ask, my young friends, that you should be utterly indifferent to dress, etiquette or attention. It asks only that you should assign them their proper places, and give them that degree of regard and consideration only, which they really deserve. And wherever she is received into the heart and embraced with a living faith, she produces the characters she wishes to see. For, I ask can it be possible that the young lady whose heart has been touched with gospel influences, who has imbibed the smallest portion of the gospel spirit, can it be possible, I ask, that such a young lady can suffer her thoughts to be engrossed, or her soul to be disturbed by these comparatively trifling objects of regard? Most

certainly not. The claims of christianity, then, are in accordance with the demands of your own nature.

Still further, where the affections are not fixed upon some worthy object of pursuit and, the mind is not employed in the attainment of that object, there will be much unhappiness. I have: my young friends, witnessed much of unhappiness, among those with whom I am associated, and I have sought earnestly for the causes of it. These are various. There is poverty. there are afflictions. There are disappointments. There are anxious and disturbing imaginations. These, and many others are causes of unhappiness. But I have been led to the conclusion; from what I have myself seen, that there is no one cause, which is every day producing so much unhappiness, with so many individuals as the want of some worthy object of affection and pursuit. I have seen I think, more real unhappiness produced by having nothing to do, or nothing which engrosses the thoughts and affections, and which from its very worth, gives a sweet and calm self-satisfaction to those engaged in its pursuit, than

by any other cause. I have indeed, seen parents in great anxiety as to the comforts of life for themselves and their children. But the efforts, they were compelled to make, served to allay their anxiety, and the unexpected supplies, which they have at times received, have filled them with great and resigned trust in the wisdom and goodness of God's overruling providence. But, on the other hand, I have witnessed tenfold unhappiness in those, who were free from want or the danger of want, but whose affections were not fixed upon some worthy object of pursuit. When the question has been asked me, in regard to such, 'what can allay their unhappiness?' I have answered, that, to human eyes, it appeared that nothing but actual calamity, or their becoming truly religious can ever accomplish the object. I feel perfectly safe, then, in saying, that where you will find one unhappy, from the various causes to which I have alluded, you will find ten rendered miserably unhappy, from the want of some worthy and engrossing object of thought, affection and pursuit. Here, too, the requirements of

christianity are in accordance with your natures. She presents to your notice the highest and holiest objects of affection and pursuits, and ask that you should devote yourself supremely to them. And thus she asks you to pursue the course, which your own natures demand, the course, without which, your affections are in danger of becoming fixed upon unworthy objects, or your soul rendered unhappy from the want of some worthy and engrossing object of pursuit.

But why, you may ask, are these remarks addressed particularly to ladies? Because, I answer, there is a difference between your situation and that of gentlemen in this respect. Gentlemen, almost unavoidably, become interested in some outward but engrossing object of thought, affection and pursuit. There are the public affairs of the nation. There are the engrossing cares of business. Indeed, there are a variety of engrossing objects of pursuit around them, which demand their attention and secure their affections. But ladies are differently situated in this respect.— They do not become devoted to the same de-

gree, in these objects of outward interest. Their engrossing objects of thought and affection must be within, must have their seat in the heart, must be self-cherished and inwardly cherished.

I do not say that all men are devoted to outward objects of engrossing interest, but that such is generally the case, that such is the natural influence of their peculiar circumstances. There are exceptions. There are men whose thoughts and affections are not fastened upon high and worthy objects, nor upon engrossing objects of any kind. And the result with them is the same as with ladies.— They become exquisits in dress, and spend their time, it may be, in dancing attendance upon the most light and frivolous of the female community. Their most worthy efforts are directed to the arranging of a boquet.— Their highest mental efforts consist in selecting and presenting flattering compliments, or in penning sonnets to the personal charms of some lady weak enough to be flattered by their attentions. They are regarded with contempt by the reasonable and reflecting

among yourselves. You perceive, therefore, that the law, which I have pointed out, applies with equal force to man as to woman, the law, that where the attention and the affections are not directed to high and worthy, or at least to interesting and engrossing objects of pursuit, they soon fasten themselves upon those which are unworthy; and that, consequently, all true, rational, elevating happiness is lost. I do not say that the circumstances in which man is placed, are more favorable than those, in which woman is placed, to the right direction, and proper development of the affections. I only say that such is the fact, that they are differently situated. The attention and the affections of the one, are almost invariably interested in some outward, and engrossing object of pursuit. The object of pursuit and affection with the other, must be something within, which has relation to the internal and spiritual.

You see, then, my young friends, what christianity asks of you, and why she asks it, and what in all probability, will be your characters, and your condition, unless you comply

with her requests. She would make you worthy of yourselves, worthy of that image of God in which the human soul was originally created, sadly debased and depraved though it now be. She would make you worthy of the station you occupy among God's creatures. Nay more, she would make you worthy the presence, the society and the happiness of heaven. She is desirous of presenting you, without spot and blameless, at the throne of God's mercy. And, that she may do this, that she may transform your very souls into the heavenly image, she asks that you would give her your hearts. And will you, my young friends, will you refuse to do this? Just look forward for a few years and inquire what may then be your situations and your characters. Shall it be that any one of you will hereafter become the object of contempt or of pity among your acquaintances, on account of the trifling, frivolous, and unworthy nature of the objects of your thought, affection and pursuit? Shall it be, that any one of you will hereafter live only for the pleasures of dress, etiquette, and cer-

emony? Shall it be, that any one of you will hereafter be the slave of foolish and needless anxieties, ever tormenting yourselves, and ever annoying all around you? God forbid. That it may not be so, depends upon yourselves under God. That it may not be so, I would, most earnestly, entreat every young lady, who may read these pages, to resolve, with a firm reliance upon the blessing of God, and with fervent prayer for his aid, to resolve that she will give her heart to her God and her Savior, that she will at once embrace the religion of Jesus, and seek for that true and living faith, which works by love and purifies the heart where it dwells.

In the second place, christianity asks of you, that you would engage, resolutely, and with a determination to persevere, in a course of moral and religious self-cultivation. This may seem to you to be but a common topic of remark. And yet, the thoughts which I wish in this connection to present to you, are not, I believe, common. Were I to urge the importance of self-cultivation, in regard to the various powers of the mind, in regard to the

memory, the judgment, the taste, you would perceive at once, the propriety of my attempt. But in regard to moral and religious improvement, your feelings, I fear, are very different. You feel that the various qualities, which go to make up a correct moral and religious character, must be the result of natural temperament or of special influences. But such is not, I am satisfied, the feeling inspired by a correct view of the claims of christianity. She would first, secure your hearts; she would have your affections fixed, supremely, upon the objects which she presents, God, the Saviour, holiness and heaven. Then, under the influence of this absorbing devotion to herself, she would have you go on in the work of moral and religious self-cultivation. That you may perceive more fully what she requires of you in this respect, let us dwell for a moment upon some traits of moral and religious character.

1st. I would speak of amiableness of disposition and of character. When it is said that such an one is an amiable young lady, the feeling is, that such is her natural temper-

ament. But there is the feeling also, that others differ from her in this natural temperament, and therefore cannot be expected to resemble her in this characteristic. And yet christianity requires that every one should be amiable. I know of no such character as an unamiable christian. I have, indeed, as, I have no doubt, you all have, seen those who make high pretensions to religious character, who were yet extremely unamiable. But this only shews that, how much soever the other parts of their character may have been influenced by religion, its power has not yet reached this characteristic. Religion requires that all should be amiable, and yet religion is addressed to persons of different temperament. The amiableness then, which religion requires, must be the result, not of natural temperament, but of moral effort. And what she asks you to become, she will, if taken to your hearts, help you to be. She teaches you that every one around is your brother or your sister—worthy, in their native tendencies and capacities, of your love. She teaches that, if the characters and manners of those

around you are not such as to enlist your affections, yet that they have souls, which God loves, which the Saviour loves, and which are worthy of your love. Nay more. She fills your heart with love for them. And is it not true, as a general rule, that we are amiable in our deportment towards those we love, and that the stronger be our love to them, even though it may take the form of pity, the more kind and amiable will be our deportment towards them.

Again, religion teaches you that those petty crosses and vexations, which disturb your equanimity, render you fretful, peevish, and unamiable, are ordered or permitted by God, and are to be regarded as the means, if rightly improved, of your spiritual good; that they are ordered in spirit and in love, to try, strengthen, and improve your moral and religious character. When you think of this, when you consider, that a calm, quiet and amiable deportment, under these provocations, will secure your religious improvement, when you consider, that God is looking upon you to see how you meet them, and stands ready

to grant you aid to overcome; you will not, I trust, suffer them to render you unamiable in your deportment. Religion then stands ready, with her instructions, her promises and her influences, to make you what she asks you to become. There is indeed a natural difference of temperament; some have greater effort to make, in order to become what religion requires, in this respect, than others. But those, whose efforts are the greatest, and whose struggles are the most severe here, may not be called upon to struggle so severely in regard to other parts of the character. And you will permit me to recommend this trait of amiableness, to your particular attention, as being peculiarly important to ladies. Men are so situated as to be exposed to great and prostrating trials, but woman is exposed to a thousand little, every day petty crosses and vexations, which are extremely annoying, which often come upon her at unawares, and which too often render her fretful and peevish and unamiable. It is therefore peculiarly important to you that you cultivate a resolute and determined amiableness of character.

2. Again, there is contentedness of disposition and character. This is a trait, which we usually regard as the result of natural temperament. And yet, Paul says, that he had *learned to be contented*. The spirit of christianity, if not its direct injunctions, requires that we should cherish and cultivate a cheerful acquiescence in the allotments of Providence. There may be then, there is a contentment, which is a moral quality. It is not the result of natural promptings, but of moral effort, *a determined contentment*. This state of mind, religion requires each one to seek. And in this respect too, she enables men to become what she requires them to be. She teaches that the allotments of Providence are not the blind results of chance, nor the stern decisions of inexorable fate, but the kind and judicious adjustments of infinite love and infinite wisdom. She teaches that every event of life, how unpropitious soever it may seem, in itself, in its circumstances and immediate consequences, may, if improved by us aright, be regarded as a blessing, in reference to our higher and spiritual improvement. And what

is more, she fixes the affections upon things high and holy, upon objects which are far above the pleasures and possessions of this life, our hopes of obtaining which, are not destroyed by any changes or disappointments in these. In this way, religion shows us why we should be contented, and directs our attention to objects, which are of infinite and eternal value, the pursuit of which naturally tends to make us comparatively indifferent to changes and disappointment in things of only temporary duration and importance. We are then, my young friends, to cherish and cultivate contentment. We are not to expect that our contentment is to spring only from natural temperament, nor yet that it is to be given to us by special influences, nor that it is to exist only in the most prosperous and favorable circumstances of our lives, when there is no cause in operation, which could possibly make us discontented. Our contentment is to be a moral quality, cherished with much care, resting on our confidence in the wisdom and goodness of God's overruling Providence, and resulting from our engaged-

ness in the pursuit of things heavenly and eternal. It should be a *determined contentment*, manifesting its influence in all its various circumstances of the life.

I have said, my young friends, that religion asks you, in the second place, to engage in a course of moral self-cultivation. And I have illustrated what I mean, by a reference to two qualities of character, amiableness and contentment. I have not selected these because they are more important than others, but because they are more often, than others, attributed to natural temperament. I have wished, thus gently, to correct an important, because it is a dangerous, mistake. The mistake, that the various qualities, which go to make up a perfect moral and religious character, are the result of natural temperament, or of special influences. I have wished to establish the conviction in your minds, that whatever may be your natural temperament, your character is to be fashioned after the christian model, and that all the various parts of your character are to be the results of your own efforts, in reliance upon those influences,

which God is ever ready to grant, influences granted, not to supercede the necessity of effort, but to strengthen and second the efforts put forth. Whenever, then, you see in others, or picture to yourselves, a single characteristic or quality, which goes to make up a perfect christian character, consider, I beseech you, that such characteristic is a proper object of effort, and, that, with the divine blessing, which will never be withheld when desired, you have the power to acquire that characteristic. You can be amiable; you can be contented, you can regulate your affections. You can cultivate tenderness of conscience and cherish feelings of devotion. God helping you, you can do these things.

But I have wished in this letter to correct another prevalent and dangerous mistake. I believe that many, who would gladly be religious, are waiting for a chance, which shall render more self-cultivation necessary. Suppose some young lady should be moved by what I have now written, and should come to me for counsel in regard to her efforts, and I should point out to her some one fault in her

moral character, and urge her to commence the christian course by attempting, in reliance upon the blessing of God, the reformation of this one fault. That young lady would have no doubt about her ability or duty in this particular. But she would feel that this was not religion, that this was mere moral effort.—Whether it would be a part of religion or not, would depend upon the motives and feelings, which might prompt the effort. The infidel, the atheist even may engage in the same moral self-cultivation, in which the christian engages. But then he would be actuated by different motives, and would be guided by different rules. The christian would be actuated by a regard to his own spiritual improvement, by desires of heavenly happiness, by a constant thought of the presence of God and of his own accountability to him, and the rule by which he would guide his efforts would be the revealed will of God. But the influences of religion do not render unnecessary this self-cultivation, on the contrary, they press it home upon the heart and conscience with ten-fold more power. You see again my young

friends, what christianity asks of you, in order that she may do all for you which she is capable of doing. She asks that you should give her your hearts, in other words, that you should set your affections upon religious improvement, as the one grand and all absorbing object of your efforts. And then, she asks that you should, under her guidance, press forward in the right formation of your own moral characters, that you should resolutely engage in the work of fashioning your own moral character, in all its parts, of feelings, desires, affections, conversation and conduct, upon the model which she presents.

But when, you ask, and how, shall we commence our compliance with the requirements of christianity? These questions suggest another important and dangerous mistake. Many are waiting for more powerful religious impressions, impressions which shall change all their feelings, and entirely banish from the mind and heart, at once and forever, all feelings and affections hostile to religion. Or, they are unwilling to begin with the reformation of a single prominent fault; they hope,

ere long, to have the subject so brought to their minds, and to have their feelings so moved, and to commence the reformation of the whole character at once. And, while thus waiting, they are neglecting the calls addressed to them, and the influence granted. This, I have said, is a mistake. And in answer to the questions when and how shall we commence a compliance with the requirements of christianity, I would say, begin this day. Begin with the religious impressions now upon your mind. Begin by reforming the fault which first presents itself to your notice. Is there one young lady, who has read what I have thus far written, who feels the slightest desire to please God, to enjoy eternal happiness in his presence, to form and sustain a religious character, and who at this moment, remembers that she has not practiced the daily reading of the scriptures, and daily approach to the throne of grace in prayer, let her under the influence of the feelings of which she is now conscious, and the impressions that are now upon her, commence, this day, these neglected practices. If any young lady is con-

conscious of having, in times past, indulged in thoughtless and frivolous conversation, let her begin, this day, the correction of this fault. If any young lady is conscious of having, in times past, confined her thoughts to the vanities of dress and fashion and amusement, and of having spent her time in preparations for, or conversations about these, to the neglect of the more important concerns of her soul, and the service of her God, and is now experiencing compunctions of conscience, faint though they be, let her, under the influence of these compunctions, seek unto God, through Christ, for pardon. Let her, this day, and without waiting for stronger feelings, commence the reformation of these faults. And in general, I would repeat the direction already given in answer to the questions when and how shall we commence a compliance with the requisitions of christianity. Begin this day. Begin under the religious impressions now upon your mind. Begin with reforming whatever fault first presents itself to your notice. But to these directions I would now add another. It is this. Begin with the feel-

ing that it is on God that you depend for success, and with fervent prayer that he would deepen your religious impressions, that he would strengthen your faith in, and devotion to, the christian religion, your faith in, and devotion to, your spiritual natures and capacities, that he would enlighten your minds in regard to truth and duty, that he would lay open to you all the hidden iniquities of your hearts, all the various faults in your character, and that he would crown your efforts, in religious self-cultivation, with success. If you will commence this day, in this way, you may be cheered by the well founded hope, the confident expectation, that although the struggle is, at first, severe, and the progress at first, but slow, yet that, in the end, you will reach the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

And, now my friends, you have learned the requisitions, which christianity makes of every one of you. Will you regard these requisitions? It is for you, in the exercise of your own free will, to say. No miracle will ever be wrought to compel you to regard them.

Will you regard the claim and the requirements of christianity? Will you give your hearts to religion, and make religious improvement the great object of your affections, desires and efforts? Will you commence a course of moral and religious self-cultivation? And will you commence that course this day, under the religious impressions which you may now experience, and with the fault in your characters, which first presents itself to your notice? These are questions for you to answer. Upon the manner in which you may answer them, depends, in a great degree, your future character, and your future happiness. Fix them in your minds, carry them with you, as you close the book. Make them the subject of your thoughts, of your conversation and of your prayers.

LETTER III.

DUTY BEFORE PLEASURE.

Recapitulation of former letters—a dangerous habit prevailing among young ladies—the habit of living for pleasure rather than for duty—Instances in proof from wealthier circles—from the middling classes—from those in indigent circumstance—three steps in the formation of this habit noticed—1st. Education made mere amusement. 2d. The reading provided for young ladies of the most frivolous kind; exciting only the desire for pleasure rather than for improvement. 3d. Our young ladies are not accustomed gradually and as they are able to the labors of the household. The effects of this habit, the source of great unhappiness, frivolity and extravagance—it unfits young ladies for all the exigencies and emergencies of future life—it exerts a preventive or a deleterious influence upon religious improvement and christian character—Appeals against this habit—to the higher classes—to those in more moderate circumstances—to mothers—to young ladies themselves.

It may not be amiss, my young friends, to remind you, that, in my first letter, I endeavored to awaken you to a full view of what

christianity had done for you, to the truths, that she had revealed you to yourselves as immortal spirits, dependent upon and accountable to God, that she had set you free from the degrading thought, that you were but the appendages of man, and had filled you with the ennobling idea, that you are emanations from the infinite and all perfect spirit; that she has thus filled you with deep reverence for yourselves, for your own natures, tendencies, capacities, and possible spiritual elevation; that she had inspired in men deep respect for you, as intellectual and spiritual beings, and filled their hearts with kindness to you; and that she had, in this way elevated your rank and ameliorated your condition. And why did I say this? Because, my young friends, I wished, if possible, to turn your attention away from the vanity and the frivolity, which are every where around you, threatening to absorb all your thoughts, to paralyse all your energies, to bring your immortal spirits down from angel flights, and confine them to the mere baby house pleasures, and the doll-dressing employments of

infant intellects. Nay more, I wished, if possible, and, through the blessing of God upon my efforts, to awaken you to the thought that, if God had seen fit to create you immortal spirits, and to place you in the near relationship of dependence upon and accountability to himself; still further, that if God, from his infinite love for your spiritual natures, had seen fit to send his only begotten and dearly beloved Son, to save you from the love, the power, the consequences of sin; and yet further still, that, if Christ had looked upon your spiritual natures, debased and depraved though they were, with a love stronger than his love of life, with a love which made him willing to sacrifice himself upon the cross for their rescue from the thralldom and the present and future consequences of sin; I wished, I say, if possible, to awaken you to the thought in all its power, that, if God the almighty, and Jesus the Savior, had felt such love for your spiritual natures, and had made such efforts to free these spiritual natures from the bondage and the inevitable consequences of sin, and to

elevate them to the happiness of holiness and of heaven; then these spiritual natures were worthy of your own most serious thoughts, most diligent and careful watch and cultivation. And, my friends, just dwell for a moment upon the thought. Has God created you in his own image, has he called you his children, has he bestowed upon you spiritual capacities and made you capable of loving, serving and enjoying him, has he sent his only begotten, his dearly beloved Son to save you from a debasing and degrading slavery, and has Jesus, the Savior, subjected himself to the ignominious death of the cross, that he might rescue your souls from wretchedness and ruin, and train them up for the holiness of heaven, and are not these spiritual natures worthy of your deepest reverence, of your most heartfelt devotion, of your highest efforts in their right training and proper development, in their cultivation and improvement? Oh, it cannot, I have said to myself, it cannot be possible, that any young lady, with these thoughts upon her mind, can remain indifferent to the high and holy purposes

for which she was created, can any longer, live for mere frivolity and vanity, or for a mere formal, outward and heartless morality, to the neglect of her immortal and spiritual interests, her soul's salvation. Under the influence of these feelings, I wished to commence my letters to you by awakening an earnest longing after spiritual improvement and heavenly happiness.

In my last letter, I endeavored to urge home upon your attention, the claims of religion upon you, in regard to your moral and religious character; to show, that she first demands your heart, nothing less than the purest and holiest and most ardent affections of your soul; and that she then asks, that you would engage, at once, with resolute determination, and under her guidance, in a course of moral and religious self-cultivation. And after hinting at the way in which you are to pursue this moral and religious self-cultivation, I closed by urging you to commence your compliance with the requirements of christianity, at once, with the impressions then upon your minds, with the reformation

of the fault in your character, whatever it may be, which should first present itself to your notice, with an humble feeling of dependence upon God, and with fervent prayer to him for guidance and assistance. And why did I say this? Because, I answer, I wished to aid you to begin your religious course aright. Some there are, who commence, what they regard as their religious course, without giving their hearts to God and his service, but in reliance upon their own energies, and in efforts at mere moral improvement. Such make no regular and valuable religious progress. Indeed, they make no *religious* progress at all. They are ever halting. All their efforts are feeble or fitful, one moment vigorous, and the next moment relaxed. Forsaking the unfailing support of God's ever ready and promised assistance, and relying solely upon their own resolutions and energies, they soon find that they have been leaning upon a broken staff. They endeavor to remove the inward and deep seated disorder of their souls, by applications to its particular outward manifestations, while

they overlook, or entirely neglect, the seat of the disorder itself.

Then, there are others, whose religious course commences in an entire change of feelings. But here they stop, they rest satisfied with this change of feelings. They do not go resolutely forward, under the influence of their renewed feelings, in a course of moral and religious self-cultivation, in efforts to strengthen and render more influential their principles, to purify and elevate their affections, to render more tender and susceptible their consciences, to imbibe more fully and breathe more constantly the christian spirit. And the consequence is, that you often discover, in the characters of such, conduct which is highly unchristian, in close connection with religious fervor. The tongue, that is one moment employed in the praise of God, is, the very next moment, perhaps, employed in circulating scandal in regard to man. The conscience that would be pained at the omission of an iota of the creed, looks quietly on, while a neighbor is deprived of his dues. These are the ways, in which

many make a wrong beginning in their religious course. I have wished, if possible, to point out to you the right way of beginning. I would have you begin, by seeking an entire a thorough, a radical change of heart, that so your affections may be set supremely upon God and his service, upon Jesus and the salvation which is by him. And then, in immediate connection with this devotion of heart to God, yea, as the very manifestation of its power, and as the means by which it is carried forward to perfection. I would have you commence a course of religious and moral self-cultivation. For I have hoped that, by beginning in this way, the more carefully you might cherish your love to God, the more constant and faithful you might be in your religious exercises, the more diligent and conscientious you would become in the right discharge of all your various duties. While, on the other hand, I have hoped that, the more diligent and conscientious you might be in your efforts for moral and religious improvement, the more carefully would you cherish your love to God, and the more en-

tirely and devotedly would you give your hearts to Christ and his religion, and that thus, these two, which are often separated, the devotion of the heart to the service of religion, and the exertion of the energies for moral and religious improvement, would be united, in well adjusted harmony, to produce the perfect exemplification of the christian character, devotion of heart, giving inward purity and steady zeal, and outward obedience, producing uprightness in dealings, knidness in social intercourse, yea, holiness of life, in all the varying scenes through which you may be called to pass.

I should have closed my remarks, my young friends, upon moral and religious character, with the suggestions of my last letter, had I not believed, that there is one circumstance in the present training and prevailing habits of many of our young ladies, which is so specious in its appearance, that it does not excite the fears, either of those who are its victims or of their friends, while, at the same time, it is so deleterious in its influences as to weaken, if not entirely efface every im-

pression that may be made, and paralyze or prevent every effort that may be put forth. Yes, my young friends, I speak, with deep conviction of the truth of what I say, and with feelings deeply saddened at the thought that it is true, when I say, that there exists and prevails among many of you, a habit of life which must be broken through, which must be done away, before you will be permanently happy in yourselves, or extensively useful to others; before we can hope that you will perform well the duties of your respective relations on earth, or make proper preparation for the enjoyments of heaven.

Do you ask what this habit of life is, which prevails so extensively among young ladies, which is so specious in its appearances, and yet so deleterious in its consequences? I answer; it is the habit of living for pleasure rather than for duty; for the mere enjoyment of the hour, rather than for the higher purpose of being useful, of doing good, of securing personal improvement and promoting domestic and social enjoyment. This habit I say, prevails among many young ladies.

Do you ask for the proof? Go visit the more wealthy circles of society. And what, I ask, do you find to be the employment of many of the young ladies there? They spend much time upon dress, in conversing about it, in studying its changes, in arranging its forms, and all for what? Is it, that, by understanding these things, they may themselves be prepared for usefulness to others, or for independent self-support, should a change come over the circumstances of their parents? Well would it be, were these their objects. But it is only that they may gratify their vanity, or perhaps, in the hope that they may set off their charms to greater advantage, and render themselves more agreeable to friends and visitors. Then there comes a little light reading, the last new novel, the most splendid and fashionable annual, or some monthly publication, designed, as it is announced on the title-page, expressly for ladies, and filled with its plates of fashions and its succession of idle and love-sick tales. All is mere froth, nothing solid, nothing substantial, nothing to inform the mind, or warm the heart, or

strengthen the principles, or improve the character, nothing to render the young lady herself more happy in resources of her own, or more capable of promoting the improvement and happiness of those with whom she may associate. Then comes a little needle-work, for it would be ungentle or vulgar to engage in that, which is more course and useful, in making or repairing the garments of the family. Then it may be a little shopping, not for purchases, but for pleasure, followed by visiting and receiving visits, not visits of friendship, where the heart is warmed, and the mind excited by an interchange of thought and an exercise of the affections, but mere calls of ceremony, to comply with the rules of fashion, indulge in idle gossip, and, it may be, to gather food for scandal. Such I say is the manner, in which day after day is too often spent by many young ladies among the more wealthy and fashionable circles of society. Do you say that I am speaking in regard to what I do not know. I answer, I speak only of what I have seen and of what my heart has been pained to behold.

Do you say that I have looked at these things only through a colored medium and with jaundiced eyes. I cannot believe that I have done so, when I find my own opinions confirmed, by so accurate an observer of manners, and one who has enjoyed so good an opportunity of knowing the habits and practices of females in the wealthier circles of society, as Miss Sedgwick, the author of several interesting works with which you are acquainted. And Miss Sedgwick, in a late work, says, 'How many lives are consumed in utter frivolity. A little light reading, a little shopping, visiting, dressing and undressing, and so day after day passes away.' Such is the language of a lady, who has been favored with opportunities of knowing, and who is well qualified to judge, in regard to what she writes, I cannot, then, but feel that there is too much of truth in the description I have given, of the way in which many young ladies, in the wealthier circles of society, spend their time and employ their thoughts.

But the habit, of which I speak, is not confined to the wealthier circles of society. I

have myself seen the family, where the father was a hard laboring mechanic, a man of worth and respectability of character, and the mother an industrious and prudent housewife, spending the day in the faithful discharge of her domestic duties, while yet, the daughters were, to use the language of the lady already quoted, the daughters were 'the mere ornamental furniture of their father's house.' Their minds were not interested in promoting the good of the family, their time was not employed in securing personal improvement. They were aping the manners of those more wealthy than themselves, and, that they might avoid vulgar attention to pressing duties, and useful labor and might appear more truly genteel, they spend their time also in light reading, shopping, visiting and dressing. This have I seen—nay more, I have mingled enough in this class of society to know that this is not an isolated or a singular case. I verily believe, that too many are the cases, among what may be regarded as composing the middle interest in society, where the father and the mother are toiling on, day after day

with ardent affection and unwearied diligence, but with mistaken kindness, in order to procure the means of supporting the daughters as young ladies, in a life of idleness, frivolity and vanity.

The habit of which I am speaking, extends itself even into families, which are in comparatively indigent circumstances, and where every effort and every energy of every member of the family, should be put in requisition to secure an honest and independent support. There are fathers and there are mothers, who are filled with that foolish pride, which makes them unwilling that their daughters should make themselves acquainted with any of those arts, which are appropriate to women, or seek, among the more wealthy, that employment which will afford the means of support. Consequently, the daughters are trained up in idleness, or in mere frivolous and useless occupations, accustomed to spend their time only in the pursuit of pleasure, and are sent forth into society to become useless and wretched incumbrances. There is among some the feeling that there is disgrace attach-

ed to poverty, and, consequently, every effort is made to avoid the appearance and the acknowledgment of poverty. There is, too, the feeling, that there is disgrace in the circumstances that a female is laboring for a support, and, especially, that there is deep disgrace attached to some kinds of employment. What mistaken notions are these! Disgrace attaches itself to conduct and not to condition. Respectability, in either male or female, is the attribute of character and not of employment. There is no disgrace in honest poverty, and where meekness and industry adorn the condition, they are well calculated to secure respect, sympathy and alleviation. But, if in the midst of poverty there is idleness, pride, with feelings above work, and vanity and extravagance, these qualities of character, and not the circumstances of condition, excite general contempt or pity. There is nothing ungenteel or vulgar, in a young lady's engaging in labor for the support of herself and the assistance of her friends. The disgrace, where there is disgrace, is attached to idleness, pride, vanity, and that

mental imbecility, that vacuity of mind, that utter heartlessness, and needless dependence, which are the natural consequences of these. To quote, still again, the language of the lady already twice referred to, 'there is no occupation so vulgar as indolence and vanity.' A moment's reflection, one would suppose, must teach this. Here, for example, is a young lady, whose parents are in indigent circumstances. She has made herself acquainted with some employment, by means of which she can secure constant occupation. In this way she supports herself, becomes independent of parental exertions, and is able to do something for the alleviation of parental wants. In time her aged parents need still greater assistance. This she is able to render them. She who in infancy was the object of so much parental anxiety, and care and effort, is now able to render some humble return for what she has received. Now I ask if every true heart, every sound mind, every one, in short, whose respect is worth enjoying, does not feel deep, and heartfelt respect for such a character. But suppose she had thought it un-

genteel, or vulgar, or derogatory to the rank and condition once sustained by parents or ancestors, and had spent her time in idleness, in vainly striving to ape the more wealthy, in dress, visiting and fashion, suppose she had cast herself in helpless dependence upon rich relatives, would she not soon have become a burden to friends, and an object of contempt or pity to all? But I trust I have said enough on this point, to establish the truth of my position, or at least enough to bring to your minds instances which have fallen within your own observation, of those, *who live for pleasure rather than for duty*; for the mere enjoyment of the passing hour, rather than for usefulness or improvement.

But perhaps you may ask for a more particular description of what I mean by living for pleasure rather than for duty. I can best answer this inquiry, by describing the process of training, by which young ladies are brought to this condition, and under which they form this habit. And first, there is an error in the very process of education. At the present day it is the position of many, that all educa-

tion, and especially the earliest steps in education, must be made so interesting as to become mere play, that so the child may be drawn along by her mere love for the amusement which the process of education affords. If a particular school does not please, it must be deserted. If any particular branch of study does not interest, it must be exchanged for one that does. All close and faithful and persevering application to prescribe lessons is decried, in the earlier stages of education, and the whole work must be accomplished by the conversations of the teacher, and these conversations must be made to interest. But what is the plain truth in regard to all this? Children love to be amused, and, if the teacher can tell stories in regard to the various branches of study, they will pay the deepest attention. And what is the effect? Instances with which I have been made acquainted, prove that children, thus trained in their earliest efforts, soon acquire an habitual loathing of all close and continued mental application. If you will tell them a story, they are all attention, if you assign them a lesson to be stud-

ied, there is fretting, murmuring, and a neglect of the lesson. Nay, worse. There is formed the habit of asking in regard to all studies, not, whether the lesson has been assigned; not, whether the faithful study of the lesson be a duty; not whether it may be used in after life, but whether it is interesting and pleasing. And thus the whole process of education becomes an inquiry for pleasure. And the school girl, even while acquiring her education, is living not for an unreserved devotion to duty, but for pleasure. And then this habit of mind soon exerts a controlling influence over the character. Are the commands and acquirements of parents pleasing? They are obeyed with alacrity. But if they are otherwise, they are either entirely disregarded, or obeyed with reluctance and murmuring. This error in education extends, in some instances, even to the Sabbath school and to religious instruction. If the child is not pleased to attend, because she does not find that her teacher possesses the power of amusing, she is permitted to stay away; if the prescribed lesson require patient study, and

close application, it is omitted, and the cry is, that all must be done by the oral instruction of the teacher. I was once called, in the absence of a friend, to take charge of a class in a Sabbath school. The children came, all bright and happy, but with no lessons. They came to be amused by the stories of the teacher. And what must be the consequences of this view? It is to connect even with the subject of religion the same search for pleasure.

Now, in view of the future character, and of what God requires of us, this seems to me to be in a great degree wrong. I speak not now in regard to intellectual improvement, although, it must be evident to every one, that a lesson, the knowledge of which is acquired by one's own persevering efforts, is, in an intellectual point of view, worth ten times the amount of knowledge passively received from the lips of another. But I speak more particularly of the influence of these views upon moral character. I would, indeed, have every study made as interesting as it can be made, by clearness of statement,

and simplicity of illustration. But, then I would have the child accustomed to go regularly and quietly through, whatever is prescribed, because such a course is the course of duty, without ever asking the question, whether it be interesting or not. If this habit be once firmly fixed, it will be of more value, in regard to the future character, than all the knowledge that can possibly be acquired.

I have said, that the first step in the formation of the evil habit, of which I am speaking, is in wrong notions of education. The second step, is to be found in the reading which is provided for the young, and especially that, to which the attention of young ladies is principally directed. The object of whatever is thus prepared, is to *interest*, to *amuse*. And most of those books, which do not succeed in this, are soon thrown aside. Is their attention directed to history? Oh, that is dull. The same scenes and characters and events must, with much embellishment, be wove into a highly wrought work of fiction, in order to secure readers. Is a didactic work upon

morals put into the hands of young ladies? In seven cases out of ten, it is thrown aside as absolutely insufferable. If the same moral instructions are conveyed in a fictitious narrative, it will secure readers. Though, in seven cases out of ten, it is more than probable, that the story is only remembered, without even a guess as to the moral instruction intended to be conveyed. To this subject of reading, I shall refer again, when, in a future letter I speak of intellectual improvement. What I now wish you to notice, is, that the great object of reading is not *improvement but amusement; not profit, intellectual and moral profit, but the mere enjoyment of pleasure*. And, thus, the reading of the day tends to strengthen and confirm the habit, commenced in early education, and of seeking only pleasure in all the circumstances of life, of living for pleasure rather than for duty. This then, the character of the reading of our young ladies, is the second step in the formation of this evil habit.

The third step is, that our young misses are not accustomed, gradually, and as they are

able, to the labors of the household. They are taught to look to domestics for the performance of a thousand little duties, which they are able to perform for themselves, and which it would be much better for them to perform for themselves. I am aware that the excuse often is, they are now at school, when they have completed their education, as it is technically called, then they can attend to this. But I am myself fully satisfied, that if put to household duties early, according to their strength, and accustomed, even while at school, to the faithful performance of a portion of these duties, their health would be improved, their mental vigor increased, and their education itself rendered more solid and valuable. And my opinion is formed from facts, that have fallen under my own observation. I have observed, almost universally, that those manifested more mental vigor, and were less superficial, and more thorough scholars, who were compelled to spend some portion of every day, in the faithful discharge of household duties. But I am looking at this, you will remember, in a moral point of view, and

in reference to future character, and here, I am satisfied, that the course pursued is most deleterious. They are accustomed to be waited upon by others, while they themselves are thinking only of their own pleasure. They thus form a habit, which it is difficult, in after life, to break through. And, you all know, that those labors to which the individual is early and constantly accustomed, are, in ordinary cases, performed with more ease and propriety, than when the attention is directed to them only in after life. Still further, this view of first acquiring an education, and then attending to those labors, gives rise to false notions. The term education, is supposed not to denote the gradual formation and development of character, by means of duties, as well as studies. It is supposed to denote a positive amount of knowledge and accomplishments, to be acquired for future use or display. And, when this idea is once fixed in the mind, the labors of the household fall under its influence. They are thought to be a part of education, the last branch perhaps, in regard to which, the ob-

ject is to acquire a positive amount of knowledge for future use or display. But to me it seems that God has established that holiest of all institutions, the family circle, for wise purposes. And one of these purposes, I believe to be, the right development and proper improvement of the characters of its various members, by enlisting the interest of each in the welfare of all, by subjecting all to mutual trials, and calling upon all for the discharge of reciprocal duties. I believe that, where the daughter cherishes an interest for the welfare of the family, feels a responsibility in regard to it, and makes sacrifices of self indulgences, and puts forth vigorous efforts in household labors and duties, the heart and the mind and the character will be improved. But when the daughter is only a boarder in her father's house, feeling no responsibility in regard to the household affairs, and consequently, taking no deep interest in them, performing, regularly and systematically, no part of the labors, she loses the benefit which God has designed for her in this holy relation. She might as well be a boarder in some

public house, there to be waited upon by others, there to live in idleness, or in those merely frivolous employments, which require no effort and call for no self-sacrifices. I have often been surprised to witness the different effects upon the heart and the character, resulting from the different courses I have alluded to. If you learn the characters of young ladies, who have been merely boarders in their father's houses, feeling no responsibility, taking no interest, performing no labors, making no sacrifices, you will be surprised to find how vain, frivolous and selfish, they are. They seem not to have acquired the power of reflection. They seem to be utterly indifferent to each other's happiness. But, on the contrary, if you become acquainted with the characters of young ladies, who have struggled with the other members of their families, making sacrifices, performing labors, and thus cherishing feelings of interest and responsibility, you will be surprised to find how much their powers of thought and reflection have been strengthened and developed, and how pure and ardent and self-sac-

rificing are their affections for those, for whom they have made sacrifices, and with whom they have labored and struggled.

You will perceive, from these remarks, that I would have every young lady, while under her father's roof, and before being called to other and different scenes and duties, regard the household labors of the family as a part of her appropriate and continued duty, not merely as a branch of education, to be attended to for a season and then neglected, but as her regular appropriate duties, assigned by God, in the very constitution of the family circle, as the best means to develope and form female character. In this view, they will not be neglected during the years devoted to books, and while acquiring the knowledge, which is to prepare the mind for future self-improvement. But, as this plan, of leaving all attention to these, until school education is completed, is so specious, it may be well to ask how it is in fact. Suppose, then, that the young lady has neglected these, while attending school. And now she returns from school, with a confirmed habit of neglect, and

an acquired reluctance of feelings, in regard to all this class of duties. She has formed the habit, it may be, of seeking only her own pleasure, instead of living for duty. Will not these habits and this reluctance, do much to prevent her engaging heartily and with interest in these labors? But, still further, she has now, among her school mates, a large circle of acquaintances. And to keep up these acquaintances, there must be a continual round of morning calls and afternoon visits and evening parties, to take up the time and attention. And, it may be, that the young lady has a circle of acquaintances among the young gentlemen, for whose calls she must ever be in full dress, as it would be highly improper to have them suppose that she employed herself in hard and useful labor at times, and dressed according to her occupation. Taking these circumstances into account, I ask, if there is any probability that there will be a hearty interest taken in household labors, and a hearty devotion to them, as the appointed and appropriate duties of life? I cannot believe there is. This, then, is the

last step, I can, at this time, notice, in the formation of the evil habit, of which I have been speaking. And, you learn from what I have said, what I mean by living for pleasure rather than for duty. I do not confine my remarks to those, who live in the extreme of folly and fashion. No; I would extend them to all who are seeking for pleasure instead of asking what is duty.

And now I will point out the effect of this habit. And first, it is the source of great unhappiness, frivolity and extravagance. It is the source of great unhappiness. God has created us for duty, for virtue, and not for mere enjoyment. He has indeed attached happiness to the performance of duty. But the question, which he would have us ask in regard to any course of conduct, is simply the question, 'Is it duty?' When we have once satisfied ourselves that any course of conduct is our duty, he would have us to press resolutely forward in its performance. Are there obstacles to overcome? He would have us, not shrink before them, but call forth stronger resolutions and put forth more vigorous efforts.

Is the course unpleasant? Still it is duty, and he would have us press forward, regardless of its unpleasant circumstances, with the feeling that, all we have to do is, to ascertain and perform duty, without once asking whether the course before us be pleasant or not.— And he has so constituted us, that the inward satisfaction of having performed even unpleasant duties, will give peace and happiness. But if, on the contrary, we ask only what will be pleasant, and seek, in our various courses, only for enjoyment, we shall find ourselves disappointed in our expectations, while the thought of having neglected duty in our search for pleasure, will give to our disappointment tenfold poignancy. This living for pleasure rather than for duty is the source of great unhappiness. It is the source of frivolity and extravagance. What is it, I ask, but this, that leads young ladies to the novel, to a blind subserviency to fashion, to seek for display in dress and furniture? Is it not, that they are seeking for pleasure from these? And, as they have left the path pointed out by God, is it strange that they should fall into a thous-

and vain and extravagant notions? Certainly not. This living for pleasure rather than for duty is the source of unhappiness, of frivolity and of extravagance. Nay more, it opens a wide door to temptation and sin. If you will look over the dark catalogue of female depravity, and will question the individuals there named as to the course they have pursued and the cause of their ruin, they must answer, if they answer truly, that they early formed the habit of living for pleasure, that they soon become vain and frivolous in mind, weak in principle and extravagant in their desires. And that to gratify their vanity, their love of finery and display, they yielded to the temptations, which assailed them, and fell the victims of sin and of moral ruin. Such, in nine cases out of ten must be the answer.

But again, this habit of living for pleasure rather than for duty utterly unfits our young ladies for all the exigencies and emergencies of future life. Suppose your parents are now wealthy. Are there not constantly recurring events, in this land, of a character to teach the uncertainty of wealth, the frequency of

change? How often do we see those who are on the very pinnacle of wealth, one day, hurled, on the next, to the deepest poverty! And most surely, with so many constantly recurring instances around you, you cannot feel safe, you cannot feel that the riches of your parents are certain. Suppose then, that a change should come over the circumstances of your parents, what would be your condition. With no means, art or power, for your self-support, with no mental vigor or strength of moral principle, with an extravagant love of finery and show and parade, a slavish subserviency to the opinions of others and the whims of fashion, having been accustomed to seek for pleasure rather than to live for duty, would you not be most wretched, and would not the sight of your wretchedness add tenfold to the anguish of the father and mother, who, in mistaken kindness, have made you a pet and trained you to vanity and extravagance.

Again, suppose you are left to wend your way through the world alone, either with or without property. Will not this habit render you wretched in yourself, and the cause of

unhappiness to all around you? Seeking only for pleasure, you are continually disappointed and continually unhappy. Having been accustomed to the services and attentions of others, you will be continually vexed at their indifference to your wishes. You will soon become a burden, and all the service and attention you can command, will be, not the service of friendship, rendered cheerfully and affectionately, but the mere mercenary attentions of the hireling, rendered in cold indifference, and only for pay. Not having been accustomed to seek out ways of making yourself useful to all around you, your society will be avoided, or, at best, only endured. Your friendship will be dreaded. Not being accustomed to depend upon yourselves, you will be compelled to feel that you must depend upon those, who have no affectionate regard for you, while you live, and who, you are satisfied, will rejoice when you are dead.

But, still further: suppose that, in the providence of God, you assume the relation of wife. How will you be prepared for the solemn responsibilities, and important duties,

and peculiar trials of that relation? You have formed the habit of living only for pleasure, and not for duty. You have accustomed yourself to a round of frivolity, vanity and fashion. You have become utterly dependent upon the services of others, for the most common attentions of life; you have not accustomed yourselves to the duties of the household, and have acquired a reluctance for its labors. If you enter the marriage relation with these habits and these feelings, you must either begin at once entirely anew, breaking up all your old habits and feelings and associations, and commencing the formation of habits and the cultivation of feelings of an entirely different character, based on different principles, and aiming at different objects. You must do this, I say, or you will be utterly wretched in yourself and the source of wretchedness in your husband. He will soon learn that he has not found a companion, that he has obtained only a toy, an expensive toy too, for it must be gaily dressed, and carefully served by two or three hired domestics. Is he in doubt? He cannot ask counsel, for you

have not been accustomed to think and reflect and cannot therefore give counsel. Is he in trouble? He dreads to communicate his difficulties to the wife of his bosom, lest, instead of summoning up energy and coming to his relief, by your retrenchment and reform, you will be only like a spoiled child, rendered disconsolate at the loss of your accustomed indulgences. You see then, my young friends, that this habit is not only the source of unhappiness, frivolity and vanity, but that it tends to destroy all energy and nerve of character, and utterly unfit you for the stations, duties and emergencies of future life.

Still further, this habit of living for pleasure rather than for duty, exerts a preventive, or a deleterious influence upon religious improvement and christian character. The habit, you will bear it in mind, is that of seeking for pleasure. Does a young lady attend the house of worship, under the influence of this habit? You might, almost as well, hope to make an impression, by speaking to the winds, as addressing her. And why? Because let her be as deeply interested as she may, it is

only her own pleasure, which she seeks, her own enjoyment of which she speaks. Could you, with the power of Almighty truth, and the eloquence of angelic tongues, speak so as to move the very stones about you, still she is the same, seeking only pleasure, and speaking only of her enjoyment of the powerful thrill sent through her frame. Nay, more, seeking only pleasure, she has no reverence for the place, the services, or the being worshiped. And even in the most solemn parts of the service, if an amusing sight presents itself, or an amusing thought is suggested, you see her at once indulging in laughter, speaking to others and disturbing many. What hope is there from the most earnest, faithful and serious discourse, addressed to such a one? Thank God there is hope, but not in the power of man, it is only in the influences of God's spirit, I say then, that this habit exerts a preventive influence upon religious improvement.

But suppose one, who is under the influence of this habit, becomes interested in religion, this same feeling of selfishly seeking pleasure, pervades her religious character. Is

any outward effort to be made, or any noble project started? You will find her all zeal and ardor. But, when difficulties arise, when obstacles oppose, then this zeal and ardor evaporate. Is there any religious exercise, in which she feels deeply interested, and from which she hopes for much pleasure, she will make every effort to attend. But is she disappointed, she is rendered uncomfortable and unhappy, shewing, that still, though under the form of religious exercises, she is selfishly seeking her own enjoyment, that she is still living for pleasure, not for duty: that her interest in religious exercises, is only a love for self gratification, that she has not learned the very first principle in practical godliness, which is an unreserved and self-sacrificing devotion to duty, to the will of God. Thus you perceive that this habit exerts a powerfully deleterious influence upon the christian character, generating self-deception, preventing or crippling christian efforts, and quenching the influences of God's spirit.

I have thus, my young friends pointed out a prevailing habit, which as I sincerely be-

lieve, stands in the way of your social, intellectual and moral improvement, a habit, which as I have said, must be broken through, before we can hope that you will be prepared for future happiness, for future duties, or for christian improvement; the habit of living for pleasure rather than for duty. I have endeavored to prove the existence of this habit, to point out its origin, and to describe its evil effects.

It remains only, that in a few closing remarks I suggest the remedies. Are there those among the readers of these pages, who belong to the wealthier circles of society, to them I would say, great responsibility, upon this subject, rests with you. It is for you to set the example of living for duty rather than for pleasure. It has been with those of your circle, that this evil of regarding the performance of ordinary labor and the conscientious devotion to every day duties as ungentleel and vulgar. Indeed it is with some of your circle that the evil has commenced, if we go still further back, in establishing gentility and not duty as the standard. And say, my

friends, shall not the remedy of the evil commence with you? God grant that it may.

Are there those among the readers of these pages, who belong to the middling classes in society, or those who are in more indigent circumstances, to them I would appeal, I would exhort them to act in independence of the foolish notions which may prevail around them. Dare to despise that which is of no worth. Dare to appear as you are, and to serve your God by a right performance of the duties of your situations, unmoved by the sneers or the practices of others. Dwell in thought upon your relation to God, and you will be strengthened to withstand the sneers of men, especially when you consider that these sneers come only from the light minded and frivolous, whose respect is not worth possessing.

Are there those among the readers of these pages, who sustain the solemn and responsible relation of mothers. To them I would appeal. Look, my friends upon those, your fair daughters. God committed them to your trust and training. In that trust you are accountable. The results of that training must

be exhibited before God. He committed them to your reasonable, social immortal beings. And now, I say, will you return them to him, with feelings made selfish, with minds rendered powerless, and with hearts filled with frivolity and vanity, with desires confined to parade and dress and fashion, shall such be the character of these precious trusts, as you return them to him, who gave them? Oh, no; God forbid. I call upon you, then, to exert all the energies of your souls, to turn the attention of female mind away from the never ending search for pleasure, and to direct it to an unreserved, self-sacrificing devotion to duty. The evil begins while your daughters are under your dictation and influence. To you then, I appeal in their behalf. Oh, sacrifice not, I beseech you, on the altars of vanity and fashion, those immortal spirits committed to your trust. Consider that it is your highest duty, and that it will be your highest honor, that you have trained them up to live for duty, and consequently for happiness and for heaven.

But, young ladies, the greatest responsibility, after all, rests upon yourselves. For, whatever may be the opinions and the practices around you, and whatever may have been your early training, when you are capable of reflection, you are called upon to act for yourselves, upon your own responsibility, and with the thought that you are yourselves, to bear the consequences of your conduct.— To you then young ladies, I appeal. And shall I appeal to you in vain, when I appeal in behalf of yourselves, and of your highest happiness and greatest improvement. It cannot be. Consider then, I beseech you, the high powers which are bestowed upon you, the elevation and usefulness of which you are capable, and say, shall all this be forfeited in your silly chase for pleasure? Consider that you have immortal spirits, committed to you, that you may train and fit them for heavenly joys. Consider what God and Christ has done for you. And shall all this have been done in vain? Oh, no. Is there one young lady who may read these pages, who, as she looks onward to the emergencies of future

years, to future character, and still further onward to the spiritual world, is there a young lady, I would ask, who will not, as these thoughts are suggested, resolve that she will no longer live for pleasure, but for duty.

LETTER IV.

INTELLECTUAL IMPROVEMENT.

Reasons for introducing the subject—first, wrong notions upon the subject of education prevalent—second but few perceive the connection there is between intellectual education and moral and spiritual improvement—Wrong notions—Education supposed to denote not the development of mind but the acquisition of a positive amount of knowledge—Education means to draw the powers out into active exercise—the studies of school to be regarded as means—the mental strength and development secured the object aimed at—This object secured by the actual exercise of the mind—without much regard to the objects about which it is exercised; Those who enjoy advantages should remember that their being well educated depends not so much upon the advantages enjoyed, as upon the manner in which they are improved, those not favored with advantages may, by the right exercise of their minds upon their duties and trials, secure the result aimed at in the pursuit of studies—mental development and strength—Intellectual development has a most important connection with moral and spiritual improvement—This proved and illustrated—All education is for eternity—What are usually regarded as results are, in this view, to be regarded as means of further advancement and progress—This thought calculated to exert a powerful influence upon the feelings and the efforts.

MY YOUNG FRIENDS:

I have, already, as you will remember, urged upon you the claims of christianity to your affections, to that faith which is of the heart, and which is, consequently, a faith unto righteousness, and unto salvation. And then I have urged upon you the importance of adding to your faith virtue, the importance of commencing, under the influence and the guidance of religion, a course of moral and religious self-cultivation. I have also endeavored to remove the obstacles in the way of your progress, by cautioning you against the danger to which you are all exposed, of forming the habit of living for pleasure rather than for duty. The way is now open for urging upon you the importance of adding to your virtue, knowledge, of connecting with your efforts for moral and religious self-cultivation, corresponding efforts for intellectual improvement. I am about to address you therefore, my young friends, upon the subject of intellectual improvement. It is a subject upon which I conceive it to be of the utmost importance to speak in this connection, and that

for two reasons. In the first place, there are prevalent among young ladies, many wrong notions upon the subject of education, notions too, which prevail, perhaps, to as great an extent among those who are conscientiously seeking for moral and religious improvement, as among others. And in the second place, but few have so reflected upon the subject as to perceive the connection there is between intellectual cultivation and moral improvement and the importance of both intellectual and moral cultivation as aids to spiritual progress.

And first, I have said there are wrong notions prevalent upon the subject of education. We often hear it said of a young lady, that she has completed her education. Does not this expression imply that education is regarded as the acquisition of a certain amount, a positive and definite amount of knowledge and accomplishments? A young lady has completed her education! And why? Because she has acquired the amount of knowledge usually acquired by young ladies of her standing, and is as accomplished as others of her age and station; or because she has acquired

as much knowledge, attended to the study of as many different branches, as would be convenient in her circumstances and with her time. Therefore her education is to her completed. I am confirmed in the opinion that such are the ideas attached to the term education, from another expression we often hear. We often hear it said that such a young lady has acquired a good education, and that the education of another lady is defective. And why so? Because the one has acquired a greater amount of knowledge, has attended to more branches of study and is familiar with a greater number of what are commonly regarded as accomplishments, than the other. And does not this mode of speaking imply, that the term education is regarded as denoting a definite and positive amount, either greater or less, of knowledge? This, it seems to me, is a wrong notion, but what, you will ask, are we to understand by the term education? In answer, I would say, that the original word from which the term education is derived, means to lead forth or draw out. The term education then, properly means the

drawing out of the various capacities of our nature into full and free exercise. And it is applied more especially to the various studies and exercises of childhood, because these are regarded as the instruments of drawing forth and exercising the various powers of body and mind, and thus developing and strengthening them. You have often heard the importance of physical education spoken of. Some years ago gymnastics were recommended to young gentlemen, and calisthenics to young ladies as useful means of physical education. But why so? Not because it was of any great practical importance, to know how to perform the various movements and exercises, to which the attention was directed, or even to be skilled in their performance. But because these exercises were thought to be instrumental in drawing forth the bodily strength, in exercising the bodily powers, in developing and strengthening the bodily system. I point out this distinction, between bodily exercise as the means and bodily health and strength, as the end to be obtained, in order to guard against a mistake,

into which men fall in regard to this, as in regard to almost every other subject, the mistake of regarding means as the essential thing, to the neglect of the end to be obtained by the use of these means.

There were some, for example, who would conclude at once, that the lady who had neglected calisthenics, or the prescribed walks and rides attended to by others, had entirely neglected all physical education. And yet it may be true, that a young lady, by a diligent and faithful performance of household duties, has actually been pursuing a most profitable course of physical education, and has actually acquired, by these labors, bodily health and strength.

So in regard to intellectual education. The various studies, to which the attention is directed, are regarded as the means of education, because they are supposed to aid in drawing out the intellectual powers into free and full exercise, and so developing and strengthening them. You will notice here that the various studies of childhood are the means to be employed, intellectual strength

and development are the objects to be attained. It is frequently the case, that you see a person, who has enjoyed but few opportunities for an acquaintance with books and with the studies of childhood. And such a one is often spoken of as a person of little or no education. And yet, if you look at the intellectual character, you will find that the mental powers are in full and free exercise, and have acquired great strength and development. The result, aimed at in all studies, has actually been obtained, although the mode of obtaining it has been different from that usually prescribed. And how, it is asked, is this? I answer, the result is, in all cases, obtained by the exercise of the mind. It does not depend upon the particular subject, about which the mind is exercised. For example, one young lady is a pupil in a high school, and her attention is directed to the study of Grammar, Rhetoric, Logic, Mathematics, and, it may be, to ancient and modern languages. But why is her attention directed to these? One reason is, that the knowledge acquired by these studies is itself important. The

knowledge of Grammar and Rhetoric will enable her to understand more fully, and to appreciate more justly the beauties of what she may afterwards read. And so all the various branches are valuable in reference to future improvement. But, still, the principal reason is, that, while engaged in these studies, she is exercising, strengthening and developing the mental powers. In the pursuit of these studies, the judgment is exercised, discrimination, nice and careful discrimination is called for—the individual is accustomed to think, to weigh, to examine, to judge. And then, too, the taste is refined and purified; in this way valuable results are secured. But another young lady is deprived of these high privileges and cannot attend to these important studies. She is comparatively in indigent circumstances. She is called upon to plan and contrive, in order to make a little go as far as it can, to make the best appearance which can be made with limited means, to exercise her own taste in regard to her dress. The consequence is, that she thinks, examines, weighs, judges; her discrimination, her

forethought are called into exercise. Her sense of propriety, her tastes are exercised. She is accustomed to self-reliance, to put forth and to depend upon her own individual energy. In this way, it often happens, that the most valuable results are obtained, the essential object, a well developed and well balanced mind, is secured, although she has not been permitted to attend to the various branches of school study. Nay, more, I have often noticed, that some ladies, who have not enjoyed the advantages of a school and a book education, have, in the duties and actual emergencies of after life, manifested a more appropriate developement of mind, a greater strength of judgement, and discrimination, and self-reliance, and self-guidance than many others, who have enjoyed the best advantages, and pursued the greatest number of studies. And why so? Because their minds had been exercised in early life upon its trials and duties in precisely the same way in which they were called to exert themselves in after life. But those with whom they have been compared, although they have attended to many studies,

have not attended to them in the most profitable manner, they have relied too much upon authority and exercised their own discrimination and self-reliance too little. Thus, you perceive that in its true and proper sense education means the drawing out into free and full exercise, the developing in a proper degree, and in just proportions the various powers and capacities of our natures, and that if this be actually done, it is not essential by what studies and exercises it be accomplished, whether by the studies of school or by the various trials and duties and efforts of actual life.

But why, you may ask, do I say all this?—Am I decrying an education at school and by means of books? By no means. I have made the remarks, which I have thus far offered, for two reasons. First, while I would have every young lady avail herself of all the advantages which may be within her reach, in the way of schools and books, I would have her understand that her improvement does not depend solely upon these books and schools and teachers, but upon the manner

in which she exercises her own mind in regard to them. A young lady may have the advantage of the best schools in the land, and may pass over a great variety of the most valuable and important studies, and yet be but poorly *educated* at last. Because she may depend too much upon authority, may take things upon trust, and exercise only her memory. She may not think for herself, or form habits of reflection. She may not discriminate nicely and judge carefully. Thus, you perceive, that such a one may not only pass over a great variety of important studies, but so far as mere recitations and examinations are concerned, she may be distinguished—may, by her parrot-like rehearsal from memory and by rote, actually excel, and yet be at last but *poorly educated*. My first reason for the remarks, which I have offered, I repeat, is to impress upon the minds of those young ladies who are now favored with high privileges, the importance of a right manner of improving them. It depends, young ladies, on yourselves and not on the reputation of the school you may attend, on the manner in which you

pursue your studies, rather than on the particular studies themselves which you may pursue, whether you shall be well educated or not. Do you study English Grammar? You should remember that this is only a key to unlock all the philosophy of language, and, that the philosophy of language is only an outward manifestation of the philosophy of mind. If then you study English Grammar, as it should be studied, and look from the technical forms of Grammar into all the peculiarities of language, and from these into the various operations of the mind, which are thus manifested, you will be studying in reality the philosophy of the human mind. You will be taught, as you do this, to turn your thoughts inward and watch the operations of your own minds, as indicated by the language you use, and to exercise the habit of observation in regard to the mental processes of others as you listen to their conversation.

In this mode of studying English Grammar, you perceive you will be exercising and developing your own mind. But there is a different way of pursuing this study. I have

seen those, who professed to be skilled in this department, and who yet never appeared to have thought of the philosophy of either language or mind. They look upon the rules of Grammar, not as the simple expression of the principles involved in the very philosophy of mind and of language, but as the arbitrary creations of man; and the application of these principles they regarded as the clipping and paring down and shaping of language to a correspondence with these arbitrary creations. I have alluded to a single and a common branch of study to illustrate my position.— And here again I would ask you, my young friends, to remember, and to practice upon the remembrance, that it depends upon yourselves and not on others, on the manner in which you pursue your studies, rather than on the studies pursued—whether your school education shall be to you valuable or not.— And this, I repeat, is the first reason for the remarks which I have offered. My second reason is, to encourage those who are not favored with opportunities for long attendance at school. I am aware, my young friends,

that there are many such in the community. Young ladies of fine minds, of ardent desires, and these desires directed to intellectual improvement, but who are compelled, from circumstances, to neglect schools and books.—Such, in the despair of their souls, are ready to give up all efforts at self improvement. To all such I would speak a word of encouragement. Remember, young ladies, that the results and not the means of education are the essential things, that the great and most important question to be asked, has regard to the actual development of the mind, and not so much to the particular branches of study employed in this development. Are you called to the continual and careful exercise of your mind for your own support, in the various adjustment of efforts to ends, in all the nicer minutiae of household duties? Sustain yourselves by the thought, that the mental exercise, called forth by these particular duties and trials, is an important and valuable process of education, that, if, in all cases you endeavor to discriminate nicely, and to examine carefully, and to judge properly, you are

exercising and developing your mind in a profitable and proper manner. And, to take the illustration already employed, the study of English Grammar—suppose you have had no time nor opportunity to attend to its technicalities, yet, by reflecting upon what you read, comparing one passage with another, by watching the peculiarities and beauties of style, and of thought, you may become most intimately acquainted with the philosophy of language and of thought. You may have your thoughts turned in upon your own mental operations, and the results, obtained by the study of English Grammar, may be yours.—You have reached them, it is true, by a different process, and may not be able to express yourself, in regard to them, in technical language. Yet the results, the knowledge of the philosophy of language and of mind, the exercise and development of your own mental powers, may be yours. Let no young lady then, be discouraged because she cannot pursue the same courses of study with many of her mates. She has a mind, the improvement of which, although it may be advanced,

yet does not wholly depend upon a particular course of studies. That mind she carries with her wherever she goes, and she can exercise it upon whatever may present itself to her notice. And by so exercising her mind, she can strengthen, develope and train it up for usefulness and happiness. Be not then, I repeat, discouraged. Avail yourselves of the privileges that may be within your reach, improve carefully the opportunities with which you may be favored, and ever employ your minds upon the various subjects presented, whether they be studies, duties, or trials, with much care, and an earnest desire for improvement. In this way, although circumstances may seem adverse, you will be daily improving in those things which are the objects of education. But I hasten to my next topic.

To me it seems that intellectual development has a most intimate and important connection with moral and spiritual progress. This connection I will now endeavor to point out. And what is moral improvement, on what is it based, and how is it promoted? Moral improvement is improvement in the right

understanding of moral duties, in the due appreciations of the motives which may move us to the right performance of these duties, and in such an entire devotion to them, as will result in the skilful performance of them. But on what are moral duties based? Do they not grow out of the natures we have received at the hands of God and of the relations which we sustain to our fellow men? On what, for example, is the duty to be temperate in all things based? The duty of governing and restraining our appetites and passions? Do not these duties grow out of the circumstance that we are created moral and spiritual beings? Experience and observation prove that indulgence in the appetites, not only benumbs our intellectual powers, but blunts and deadens our moral sensibilities. Such indulgence, then, is wrong, is sinful. For it is wrong to unfit ourselves by the indulgence of our appetites, for the high moral efforts and moral purposes for which we were created. Again, experience and observation prove that the indulgence of our appetites, deadens our spiritual capacities and

you, I ask, go at once from a surfeiting feast, to your closet of prayer, with any well grounded hope that you will be enabled to engage in that exercise with true fervor and heartfelt devotion. Most surely not. God has created us with animal appetites. These are given us as the means of guiding us to those things which will promote the health of our bodies. He has created us with intellectual capacities, these were given us that we may study out and understand our natures, our relations, the works and ways, the character and purposes of God. He has created us with social affections. These were given us that we may enjoy and impart both happiness and improvement in our intercourse with friends. He has created us with moral sensibilities. These were given us to guide us into the path, and to urge us on to the faithful performance of duties. He has created us with spiritual capacities. These were given us that we may hold communion with the father of our spirits. In the perfect character these are all developed in their due and proper proportions, and preserve towards each

other their proper relations—and consequently the improvement of each tends to the more appropriate and rapid improvement of all the others. The animal appetites, if rightly and properly indulged, promote health of body, and thereby strengthen us for greater social enjoyment, and for higher intellectual efforts. The social enjoyments and intellectual efforts, when indulged in and put forth in a proper degree, being under the guidance of moral principles and susceptibilities, afford to these appropriate exercise, and consequently serve to develope and strengthen them. And where the tenderness of moral susceptibilities is cultivated, and the strength of moral principles is increased, and purity of moral character is secured, there the spiritual and devout and holy affections rise up into a more close and intimate communion with the Father of spirits. You perceive, therefore, that where the appetites are indulged to excess, the individual is unfitted for the higher and holier exercises of his spiritual nature. The young lady who employs her intellectual powers upon vain and frivolous pursuits, unfits her

self for the higher enjoyment of spiritual communion with God. Where social enjoyment, or mere intellectual improvement, are made the great objects of life, moral improvement and spiritual progress will be retarded. But how are these principles of human nature and their mutual relation known? Is it not by a process of intellectual improvement? Most surely it is! And now what is the effect of this intellectual improvement? Here is a devout and conscientious, but exceedingly ignorant christian. She may be faithful in the discharge of duty, because she fears, with slavish dread, that positive punishment may be inflicted. Suppose her to be enlightened by a process of intellectual education. Suppose her to understand the constitution of the human soul, and to see clearly in what way the faithful performance of duty promotes spiritual improvement, and that misery is not an arbitrary infliction of an angry sovereign, but the result of a wise and merciful adjustment of the constitution of our natures. Will she not see, in all, the work of infinite love, and seeing this, will not her obedience be more

free from restraint, from slavish dread? Will she not be now drawn to the faithful performance of duty, by the cords of love? And is not this a more powerful, as well as a more pleasant motive, than slavish fear? Thus you perceive, that the simple branch of school studies, English Grammar, leading, as it does, if pursued aright, to a knowledge of the philosophy of mind, and leading, still further, as, by reflection and personal examination it may do, to a knowledge of the operations of your own mind, may be instrumental in producing a greater reverence for your own spiritual capacities, a better understanding of the grounds of personal duty, and in presenting new and more powerful motives to faithfulness and obedience, may thus be instrumental in promoting your moral improvement and your spiritual progress.

Take another class of duties, belonging to the same connection, the duties of love and charity to others, and especially to those, who may differ from you in religious opinions.—The ignorant christian, who is conscientiously obedient to her Master's instructions, will

undoubtedly strive, and that most strenuously, to perform these duties. But they will be performed out of regard to what is considered a positive and an arbitrary command. But if the same person should make valuable intellectual acquirements, she will see the reasonableness of this commanded duty. She will understand how it is, that from the differences in the construction of different minds, from early education and prejudice, from viewing the same subject, as many are compelled to view it, from different directions minds equally desirous of understanding and obeying the truth, equally honest, sincere and devout, in all their inquiries, may, and often do, arrive at different conclusions. Still further, she will find some who have embraced what she regards the true views of christian duty, holding this truth in unrighteousness. And she will find that many, whose views of christian truth are apparently extremely defective, are led by what little of truth they do embrace, to maintain pure and holy lives. Now, with this knowledge, will she not perceive the reasonableness of the duty? Will

not her motives be much stronger than before?

Thus you perceive that those branches of knowledge, which relate to the nature, operations and philosophy of the human mind, may be instrumental of moral improvement and spiritual progress.

And now turn your thoughts to natural science. Suppose two young ladies walk out, and as they walk, their attention is directed to the glorious luminary of day, or to the fair queen of night, with her starry hosts. The one is ignorant. She only gazes upon these wonderful objects with a wild stare of amazement—with feelings of superstitious dread, or in utter indifference, as at something common, every day occurrence, and not worthy of particular attention. The other young lady has acquired some good degree of acquaintance with the science of astronomy, and to her, every change in the appearance of the sun or moon, every twinkling star, is instinct with life, light and intelligence. She looks upon them all as the handy works of God, and she understands something of the wonderful manifestation there is in them, of

wisdom, power and goodness. It has been said by the Royal Psalmist of Israel, that 'the heavens declare the glory of God.' To which mind, I ask, to the ignorant or to the instructed mind, do these works most fully declare this glory? Can there be any doubt? While the ignorant young lady is staring in amazement, or turning away in indifference, the mind that is instructed, is filled with the thoughts of God, her affections are carried up to the former, and sustainer and governor of all worlds, and she is ready, under the prompting impulses of her own devout feelings, to exclaim with the poet, 'An undevout astronomer is mad.'

Again, suppose our heavens to be spanned, as they sometimes have been, by the beautiful arches, or the earth bathed in the beautiful hues of the Aurora Borealis, with what widely different feelings are these phenomena viewed by the ignorant and the instructed. The ignorant gaze with mute indifference or superstitious dread. To minds uninstructed, these things may appear only as indications of divine wrath and portentous omens of future

calamity. But the mind that is instructed, sees in these same phenomena, only a beautiful and heart stirring testimony of divine love. Instead of shrinking away in superstitious dread, the heart leaps for joy—goes forth to meet in holy meditation the God in whose hands are the lightnings of heaven, who rideth upon the whirlwind and governeth the storms. But, if the science of astronomy thus gives to the mind instructed in its truths, such clear, forcible and vivid views of God, as the ruler of all worlds, and calls forth lively feelings of gratitude—it must, of course, promote moral improvement and spiritual progress. For our strongest motives to the performance of moral duties are those, which are based upon love and gratitude to God. It must promote spiritual progress, for it calls into lively and active exercise the very feeling which constitute a part of our spiritual exercises. And the same may be said of all the natural sciences. To her who is acquainted with entomology, or the history, characters and habits of insects—every fly that buzzes, every insect that crawls, every spider that

spins its web, is an object of deep interest, an object of careful observation, an object which conveys to the mind much instruction. To her who is acquainted with the science of botany, every flower she may rear, every plant she may tend, nay more, every worthless weed, as it is called by others, is an object of deep interest, and of heavenly instruction. Those beautiful plants, which in summer adorn your yards, and in winter your parlors, may not only contribute to the gratification, of a pure and healthy taste, they may even become living mementos for God, living ministers of good, ever presenting to you new and more beautiful proofs and manifestations of God's continued presence, agency and goodness. Thus you perceive that knowledge may promote moral improvement and spiritual progress. I do not say that knowledge, simply in itself considered, will necessarily or naturally do this. What I say, is that when viewed through a christian medium, it will do this. And you will remember, that I do not bring forward the cultivation of knowledge as a preliminary and commencing step,

but as what should be added to the essentials, faith and virtue, as what is to be cultivated as next in importance to giving the heart to God, and devoting the energies to moral and religious self cultivation. In this subordinate place, I do conceive that it may be instrumental in promoting our moral improvement and our spiritual progress. I do most sincerely and heartily believe that the more our knowledge is increased, the deeper and stronger and more influential will be our faith, our trust, our devotion, and the more unreserved, free and cheerful, will be our obedience.— And this for a very plain and obvious reason. The whole universe will furnish ministers to our religious improvement. Every insect that crawls, every bird that flies, every beast that moves, every fish that swims, every flower that blooms, every plant that grows, every pebble beneath our feet, the ocean that rolls, the wind that blows, the clouds that fly and drop their fatness as they pass, the sun, the moon, the stars that shine, all, all these come fraught with a message from God to the soul of man. But ignorance, on the other hand,

closes all these streams at once, and shuts out from the ear the still small but powerful voice of natural objects and mental truths.

I have thus, my friends, endeavored to correct some wrong impressions upon the subject of education, and to point out the connection between intellectual improvement and moral and spiritual progress. It remains that I direct your attention to one thought more, before I close, a thought, which might have been connected with my first position, but which I preferred to reserve for this separate consideration, that so I might give it, if possible, a more distinct representation, and cause it to make a deeper and more vivid impression. The thought is this, that all education is for eternity, and that consequently there is no limit to the period of acquiring an education on earth, but the limit of life. No one has completed her education until she has closed her life. This thought is highly important in one particular aspect. It shews that what are usually regarded even as the results of education, are to be looked upon only as the means and instruments of still fur-

ther advances either intellectual, or moral and spiritual. Are you, my young friend about to leave school with the thought that your education is completed? Let me show you your mistake, and, that, instead of being completed, it is but just commenced. What have you done at school? You have acquired a knowledge of language. And what is language, but the manifestation of thought?—Words without thoughts are unmeaning symbols. We value words because, by some strange property of the mind, we can, as we look upon the printed page, learn what were the thoughts that passed through another mind in past ages or in distant lands. Language then is the instrument, by which we are to make ourselves acquainted with the thoughts of those who lived before us and who are absent from us. But, in studying and understanding language at school, a young lady has only learned how to use the instrument. Suppose, for example, that a young lady has made herself acquainted with the French language at school. The great advantages of that acquisition are two. She has exercised her

mind in a peculiar way and acquired a peculiar mental habit, and then she has learned the use of a key, which may unlock to her the wealth of the whole French literature and science, the wealth of minds rich in thought and skilled in science. Now, here is what is usually regarded as one result of study. The result is that the young lady is acquainted with the French language. But this result, you perceive, is to be regarded only as the means of still farther advances, only as the means of an acquaintance with the wide range of French literature and science. But here you may say is the end of the process the ultimate and final result. By no means. Of what value is a knowledge of French literature? Is it not that, in that knowledge we find food for our own thoughts and inquiries? By our own thoughts, inquiries and reflections we find our minds strengthened and developed. We may correct, in our own conclusions, errors which we discover in theirs.—We may follow out trains of thought, suggested by them. We may advance beyond their farthest limits in our own discoveries, being aided by what we

have learned of their discoveries. In this way, you perceive that a knowledge of French science and literature, which by many would be regarded as a result, is in reality to be looked upon only as a means for further progress and higher advances. But, to carry this same branch still farther, how will the mental improvement, which we have been enabled to make by our knowledge of French literature, serve as a means, of still farther advancement? I answer that the individual, who has made this improvement, has learned much of the nature and operations of the human mind, and of the relations which are sustained towards the infinite and eternal spirit. Consequently, she can see more clearly the various reasons of the duties required, and can feel and understand the force of the obligations which are upon her. She has more comprehensive and influential views of God's wisdom and goodness. She sees and feels more deeply the affinity of spirit with spirit, the connection of the finite with the infinite. In this way, all her own mental actions and intellectual improvement may be the means

of higher moral advances and greater spiritual progress. But, perhaps, you may say, young ladies, that you will never have opportunities for following out a particular branch of study to so great an extent. Perhaps not. Let us take then an illustration of a different character. Suppose you have enjoyed very few advantages for intellectual improvement, have been obliged to confine your attention to household duties or to direct it to some appropriate art for your support? Have you confined your attention to household duties and become skilled in their performance?—You have probably, in doing this, learned to regard these as *duties*, and have formed the habit of performing well all duties. Here then, in the very outset, you have acquired the means of further improvement. For, should your circumstances change as they undoubtedly would, and your duties undergo a corresponding change, the habit which you have formed while about your household duties, will go with you through these changes and will be the means of your making great and rapid improvement from the various chan-

ges, in scenes and duties, through which you may pass. Still further, your correct and appropriate performance of household duties, gives you the power of conferring pleasure upon others and of contributing to their happiness and improvement. It may, therefore, be put forth as a manifestation of your own kindness of heart, and by exercising, may strengthen your own benevolent feelings and affections. In addition to this, there is in the discharge of even household duties, to one who strives to perform them in the best possible manner, a good and healthy exercise of the mind, of examination, forethought, reflection and judgement. Thus you see that knowledge and skill in regard to household duties, may be instrumental of intellectual, moral and spiritual advancement. And from these illustrations I trust that you will perceive that every branch and every step of education, while it may be regarded as the result of the steps which precede, should also be regarded as the means of reaching the steps which are before, and instrumental of still further and still higher advances, and still greater progress.

In this respect, the thought which I have last suggested, is truly important, that all education is for eternity; that no education is complete until this life is swallowed up of death. And I might with propriety add, that in the view of christian character and eternal happiness, there is a subordination in the different parts of education. The true christian will desire, and strive earnestly for intellectual improvement. But she will ever value intellectual improvement, not so much on its own account, as because it may be the means of moral improvement. She will strive strenuously for the improvement of her moral character. But it will be principally because she is satisfied that the more pure her moral character may become, the higher will her devout affections and spiritual aspirations rise; and the greater will be her religious progress.

Yes, my friends, the thought that all education is for eternity, is one of vast importance, and it gives to all the parts and branches and modes of pursuing education, a vast importance, an importance, which may be felt, but which cannot be described. You

have all read of the accession to the throne of England of Princess Victoria, and of the care with which her mother educated her, in view of her possible elevation to that rank. Now, would you not all feel, that the circumstance, that a young lady is to be placed in so important a station, gave to all the parts and branches and modes of pursuing her education a vast importance? Would you not feel that whatever others who were preparing only for the ordinary walks of life might do, it would be of the utmost importance for her to be educated in the most perfect manner possible? But what is the throne of England, with all its elevation, and splendor and influence, so far as the individual is concerned, compared with the eternal interests of an individual's own soul? Is it not, then, much more important that she, who is educating her soul for eternity, should endeavor to train it up in the most perfect manner? This, young ladies, is a view which may be brought home to your own cases. When you think only of the future duties of life, you may say in regard to any branch or any mode of pursuing

your education, this is of no great importance, it has reference only to the unimportant scenes and duties of ordinary life. With this feeling you will be in danger of neglecting your intellectual improvement, or of pursuing it in an improper and unprofitable manner. But when you consider that carelessness in the studies of intellectual education, may induce habits of carelessness in regard to moral character, and that carelessness in regard to moral character, may utterly prevent all spiritual improvement, and that the want of spiritual improvement will unfit for the enjoyment of heavenly happiness, then will you feel that it is of infinite importance to avoid this carelessness in the studies of intellectual education. Oh, then, dwell upon the thought which I have presented, that all education is for eternity. For, if you dwell upon this thought, you cannot, you will not waste the precious season with which you are favored. You will ever and in all circumstances of life, be seeking intellectual, moral and spiritual improvement. And are any of you, my friends, so circumstanced that the study of books must be

neglected? Consider I beseech you, that in every struggle with trial and difficulty and temptation, your intellectual power is increased, while at the same time and by the same effort, your moral principles are strengthened and your heavenward aspirations rendered more fervent. So if, in the face of opposition under temptation, or indeed in any circumstances you persevere in the performance of duty, you will find your mental powers, your moral sensibilities strengthened. You will be continually making perceptible progress and at each step you will gain strength for still further and more vigorous efforts. Thus your intellectual, moral and spiritual education will be continually making progress. They will go on hand in hand in mutual harmony, and with mutual benefit.

LETTER V.

INTELLECTUAL IMPROVEMENT.

Recapitulation of the last letter—the importance of acquiring a taste for reading—Improvement by reading depends not so much upon the amount read as upon the manner of reading—Important to read slowly—with much thought and reflection, and self-application—Improvement in reading depends not so much upon the amount as upon the character of what is read—Five specific objections against novel reading—Works of imagination sometimes important to verify general conclusions, or to illustrate abstract truths—Reviews and other light reading of the kind should be taken up only occasionally—The principle reading should be of a solid character—The reading of the Bible urged—Some hints in regard to the manner of reading the sacred volume—Importance of the habit of observation—Suggestions on amusements and their influence upon intellectual and moral improvement—Conclusion.

MY YOUNG FRIENDS:

In my last letter, I endeavored to point out what I conceived to be important princi-

ples upon the subject of intellectual improvement, and to shew the connection between intellectual development and moral and spiritual progress. The particular suggestions of my letter were these three. First, that the great object of education is to draw out, exercise and develope the various faculties of our nature, that books and studies are the means of accomplishing this object, but that, as the strength and development of the mental powers depend upon the actual exercise of the mind itself, rather than upon the particular studies and subjects about which the mind is exercised, it sometimes happens, that those who are deprived of books and of study, do, by a simular exercise of their minds upon the actual duties and trials of life, obtain the same or similar valuable results with others, and, consequently, that those young ladies who enjoy great advantages should remember, that the value of their education will depend upon their own faithfulness in the right exercise of their minds, rather than upon the high character of the advantages which they enjoy, while those, who are deprived of these priv-

ileges, may be encouraged to seek for the same results, in rightly meeting the trials and rightly discharging the duties of life. This I say, was the first suggestion.

My second was, that all knowledge, and all intellectual improvement, if looked upon in the light of Christianity, and applied under the influence of Christian principle, may become the instrument of moral improvement and spiritual progress, by making known to us the grounds of duty, and setting before us stronger motives for its performance. Such was my second suggestion.

My third was, that all education is education for eternity, and that, consequently, the intellectual development and the intellectual acquirements, which are usually regarded as the results of education, are to be regarded, in view of eternity, but as the means and instruments of still further progress in intellectual, moral and spiritual improvement, and that there is no limit on earth to the period of acquiring an education, but the close of life itself.

I propose, in this letter, to speak of the means of securing intellectual improvement,

and of some of the hindrances, which are to be encountered in the attempt. And I would first offer some remarks upon the subject of reading in its influence upon intellectual improvement. I feel that I ought to urge upon your attention the importance of *acquiring* a taste for useful reading, as one of the greatest safe-guards to your future character, one of the most fruitful sources of happiness and improvement. I have seen young ladies, who had been so accustomed to live upon outward excitement, that they were most miserably wretched, when left to themselves. They were in possession of no inward resources of happiness. They had been accustomed to look without for all their enjoyment, and consequently, all within was an empty void. In society they are perhaps the liveliest of the lively. All with them, at such times, is noisy mirth and boisterous merriment. They are not only full of life and animation themselves, but they breathe life and animation into all around them, they are the life of the whole circle where they are. Such they are, when placed amid outward circumstances calculated

to excite them. But when by themselves, when left alone, all this life and animation gives place to uneasiness, to murmuring and fretting, or settled gloom. They seem not to know that there may be happiness in quiet cheerfulness, that it is possible for one to find sources of happiness in her own reflections and meditation and reading. And, having secured no resources of happiness within themselves, they are ever wandering abroad in its pursuit. Gadding, calling, visiting, or receiving visits, any thing is welcomed as a relief from the tedium of mental vacuity. Such young ladies I have seen. And when I have seen them, I have felt the importance of securing resources of happiness within one's self. I would, then, urge the importance of acquiring a taste for useful reading with this view, as a resource of happiness within yourselves. If you acquire this taste for useful reading, you need not often be alone. Your companions of your own age, your ordinary associates may be far away. But still, you may have with you the writings of the distinguished of past ages. Sages and philosophers,

wise men and devout men, may thus be your companions, your associates in these solitary hours, as they are usually called. With their minds you may hold communion. You may listen to their communications and meditate upon their instructions. You need not be alone. You never need lack for resources of happiness within yourselves. Then, too, useful reading furnishes pure and profitable thoughts to the mind, and excites amiable, and pleasant, if not holy affections in the heart, and thus furnishes you with an ever ready source of enjoyment and improvement. A striking thought, for example, may be suggested, which will give rise to a long train of reflections, and thus, hours may be pleasantly and profitably spent in company with the good thoughts of others. So a pure emotion may be excited, which is connected with a long train of pure and holy affections, and thus time may be passed pleasantly and profitably, in communings of soul and heart, with the wise and pure of past ages, when you are prevented from enjoying the society of companions of your own. I would then urge upon every

young lady, who may read these pages, the importance of acquiring a taste for useful reading, as a resource of happiness, independent, in some degree, of outward associates. You cannot expect always to be placed amid outward excitement. There must be times, when you will be by yourselves, and when, if you have no resources of happiness within yourselves, you must be most miserably wretched. And then, too, if you could hope to live always amid outward excitement, it would lose its power over you. Should you be spared to old age, you must then be wretched. If then, my young friends, you would have resources of happiness within yourselves so as to be independent, in some degree, of outward circumstances—if you would lay up a fund upon which you may draw in seasons when you are left solitary—and especially when the period of old age, with all its decrepitude and helplessness, shall arrive—acquire, I beseech you, a taste for useful reading. I might say more upon the importance of this—but I hope to set forth that importance in a more discriminating manner, in the further

and more definite remarks I propose to offer, upon the most profitable modes of reading.

I would remark then, that the real improvement, to be derived from reading, does not depend so much upon the *amount* which you read, as upon the *manner* in which you read. There is a taste for reading and a habit of reading, which are of no great value either as the means of improvement or as a resource of happiness. A person may have acquired such a taste for reading as to devour greedily and rapidly every book that may fall in her way. And consequently she may be able to tell, at the close of the year, of the vast amount of her reading. She may be deeply interested while she reads, and may even remember, with a good degree of accuracy, what she has read. And yet, if this be all, she may derive no great profit from her reading. Its effect may be that of mere passive excitement, and the impression made, may be only upon the memory. Indeed, I have sometimes thought that improvement is as often prevented by reading too much, as by reading too little. It was once said, by a distinguished legal gen-

tleman, in giving hints to a student, that he had not himself read one tenth part as much law as an inferior lawyer to whom he referred, and that if he had read as much, he should in all probability have been no more distinguished than the gentleman to whom he alluded.— Whether the gentleman ever made the remark or not there is much of truth and sound wisdom in the remark itself. And why so?— Because, I answer, the profit derived from books, the real substantial profit, results, not from the act of reading, not from the pleasure with which we read, not even from the accuracy with which we remember what we have read, but from our own reflections upon the subjects and thoughts presented in reading. Let me illustrate. Here are two young ladies engaged in reading the memoirs of some one of distinguished worth, of their own sex.— This memoir, suppose it to be those Miss Hannah More, or of Mrs. Hemans, this memoir consists of a narration of the circumstances and events of her life, of the various changes in feeling and character through which she passed, and of the various scenes in which she

mingled, and of the various influences to which she was subjected. The simple narration, whether it be in the words of the compiler or in the correspondence of the lady herself, is interesting to both, perhaps to both alike. But one of these young ladies is satisfied with this interest, which has been excited—with the mere passive pleasure, which she has enjoyed. Or, if she goes farther than this, she is satisfied with being able to remember and relate what she has read. She reads rapidly and is soon ready to lay aside the book and pass with equal zest to another and a different one. The other reads slowly, she will wish to keep the book weeks instead of days. She is pleased as she reads, but then she wishes to pause, from time to time, and reflect upon what she reads. She makes the substance of her reading the subject of much and frequent thought after she has closed her book. She scans in her own mind the various parts of the character. She traces actions back to motives, and notices the manner, in which circumstances and motives peculiarly effect the subject of the memoir, in consequence of her

peculiar natural temperment, or early education, or acquired prejudices. She compares the character, of which she is reading, with others of which she has before read, or with those, with which she has been acquainted. And finally, she applies what she reads to herself, to her own circumstances, temperment and duties. As she has done this, she has taken up the book, and again and again turned to passages, to see if her recollection of them be accurate and her inferences from them just. She does all this, not by a regular process of daily devotion to reading for hours at a time, but, while about her ordinary household duties. It may be, that, after the morning labors, she finds a few moments to read, that, as she sits plying her needle of an afternoon, she occasionally turns to the book by her side to re-examine a passage, upon which she is thinking, or that, just before she retires she spends a few moments with her book. In this way, although she may read slowly, may seem to be making scarcely perceptible progress, and although her companion may have read many volumes during the time, yet she

has derived great profit from what she has read. And why so? Because, I answer, she has made what she has read the subject of careful thought, long continued meditation, and deep reflection after she has closed the book. Thus, my friends, you perceive that the real, substantial profit to be derived from reading depends, not so much upon the amount of what you read, as upon the manner in which you read, in other words, it depends not so much upon reading many books, as it does upon your making the substance of what you read the subject of your thoughts after the book is closed. I have dwelt the more carefully upon this point, because I am addressing those, who in all probability, will not have time and opportunity for reading many books, and who are sometimes in danger on that account of neglecting to make the best possible improvement of the few books which they can read, and because I wished to give instruction adapted to your future circumstances. Situated as most of you probably will be, so that you cannot read much, with minds often distracted by household cares, and with bodies

fatigued by household labors, still, if you are faithful to yourselves, you can read a small portion each day, and by making the substance of what you read the subject of much thought and reflection, you may be every day securing much real and substantial profit from what little you do read.

I must here, however, guard against a mistake, into which my remarks may lead you.—The mistake is, that of reading a little in a great variety of books. You may under the influence of this mistake, read a little in one book, in the morning, a little in a different book in the afternoon, and a little in a third book in the evening. And these different books, it may be, will treat of entirely different subjects. If this be the course pursued, your reading will distract your thoughts, and you will be prevented from that long and close and serious reflection upon what you read, which will make your reading profitable. Suppose, for example, that you are reading either of the memoirs to which I have alluded, let it be the principal subject of your reading, and thought and reflection until you

have finished the book, and by reflection have inwardly digested what you have read, until you have, in your own minds, some clear and connected views of the character, in all its peculiarities and principles, until you have discovered some mode of applying the instruction you have gathered up, to the improvement of your own character. So, if you are reading a work upon morals, upon practical religion, or doctrinal theology, confine your attention and your thoughts principally to that for the time being. You may read but little each day, but by thinking and reflecting upon what you read, your reading will, from day to day, be connected, and by having well digested what you have read upon one day, you will be prepared for reading more profitably on the next. Thus much would I say in regard to the manner of reading and of making the most improvement of what you read.

I remark, in the second place, that the intellectual and moral improvement, to be derived from reading, depends, not so much upon the amount of your reading, as upon the character of what you read. And here I

would enter my most solemn protest against that most foolish and dangerous practice, into which young ladies often fall, the indiscriminate reading of novels. This class of books is so rapidly enlarged, and our circulating libraries are to so great an extent filled with them—for circulating libraries must be filled with what the public taste demands—that they crowd themselves upon the attention, always presenting something new, and for the most part, something fascinating, and many fall victims to their evil influences. But what, you may ask, are the specific objections to novel reading? I answer,

1st. That the representations, which they give are too highly wrought. Their scenes of distress are entirely different, in degree at least, from any thing, which you see in real life. The virtues, which they depict, are distinguished, signal, striking virtues, such as you do not meet with, in the common, every day scenes of life. And, consequently, the knowledge which you get, or suppose you are getting of mankind and of human nature, is only a knowledge of the pictures of the wri-

ter's imagination, it is not a knowledge of mankind, and of human nature, as it appears around you, in the common and every day walks of life. The effect of this is, that it leads your mind off upon a wrong tract, in a wrong direction, excites unfounded expectations in regard to human nature, and, thus shuts up the mind against a simple and profitable observation of men as they appear around you. This, then, is my first objection to the indiscriminate reading of novels.

2d. My second objection is, that they are the most difficult books to read profitably. I have pointed out what I conceive to be the most profitable way of reading, that is, to read slowly and pause often, and reflect long upon what you read. And now, I appeal to those of you who are familiar with novel reading, and ask if your own experience does not testify that novels are the most difficult of all books to be read in this way? Does not your highly excited interest in the plot, your anxiety to know the issue—do not these, I ask, carry you forward with great rapidity? Is it not often the case, that your reading is

only skipping along from place to place, reading just enough to catch the story? And, when you have closed the book, what is fixed in your memory, the simple outlines of the story merely, or the peculiarities and principles of character? Do these books excite and aid you to form habits of reflection? I am well satisfied that any young lady who really wishes to read, in the way which I have pointed out, with much thought and reflection will find it more difficult to effect this, in reading novels than in reading any other books. She will find it somewhat difficult to form this habit under any circumstances and with all the helps she may obtain. But she will find, that the indiscriminate and excessive reading of novels, will not only afford her no assistance, but will exert a powerful influence in opposition to this habit. And this is my second objection to this kind of reading.

3d. My third objection is, that they excite a distaste for reading of a more serious and profitable character, and unfit the mind for a right improvement of serious reading and conversation. How often is it the case, that

the novel reader lays down, in disgust, or only yawns over the most serious and valuable books than can be put into her hands, books rich in thought and beautiful in style, books calculated to excite thought and afford food for meditation. Nothing but what will produce an almost feverish excitement, and carry her with rail-road rapidity, over the course, has any charms for her. And should she, by dint of perseverance, read a serious book, there will be no habits of reflection, no trains of association, that are in accordance with what she reads. And consequently, she will derive but little profit from her reading. And this is my third objection, that it produces a distaste for more serious and profitable reading. Perhaps the difficulty here lies deeper and extends wider than even the distaste for serious reading. It may be, that the habit is formed of seeking for pleasure rather than for improvement in reading, a habit, which, if once fixed, will in all probability extend its withering influences over the whole character, exciting the search for pleasure rather than inducing devotion to duty.

4th. My fourth objection is that the indiscriminate and excessive reading of novels, blunts and deadens the finer sensibilities of our nature. I will illustrate by a reference to our benevolent feelings. In novels, scenes of distress are described, highly wrought, deeply affecting. The heart of the reader is moved, and with many, tears even flow readily as they read. But they are not moved by their feelings to action. It all evaporates in mere feeling. And these persons, who will weep profusely over the pages of a novel, will look with utter indifference upon the real distresses of actual life, of a friend or a neighbor. Now it is a fact in the philosophy of the human mind, that wherever the better feelings of our nature are excited upon any subject, and are suffered to evaporate in mere feeling, to pass away without producing action, the feelings themselves are either blunted and deadened, or are cherished only for the passive luxury of the mere indulgence of feeling. If a preacher, for example, is in the habit of attempting to move his hearers by terror, although he may succeed for a time, yet soon his terrific lan-

guage loses its power over his hearers and they will listen to it with perfect indifference. They undoubtedly felt, and felt deeply at first but they did not act in accordance with their feelings. Consequently, they now either do not feel or their feelings have lost all power over their conduct. So it is with the readers of novels. Their feelings are at first excited, but there is no opportunity for them to act in accordance with their feelings. Consequently, they either cease to feel or their feelings are entirely separated from their conduct and have lost all control over it. In this way the indiscriminate and excessive reading of novels blunts and deadens the finer sensibilities of our nature.

5th. My fifth objection to novel reading and the last which I shall now notice, is that they tend to magnify and render too prominent the passion of love, and to teach the most absurd and dangerous notions in regard to it. If ever you have become acquainted with one who is under the influence of the novel reading mania, you must have observed that the passion of love, its symptoms, its peculiar

feelings and pleasures, have become the engrossing topic of her conversation, the theme of her daily thoughts, and the subject of her midnight dreams. And then too, she gathers foolish and absurd and dangerous notions from reading, in regard to the nature and proper influence of this passion. It is connected in her mind, not principally with the truly estimable and lovely qualities of the mind and the heart, but with bright eyes, and elegant proportions, and fair looks, and soft flattering speeches. It is regarded, not, like any of the other passions of our nature, as what must be watched and governed by reason and religious principle, for whose influence over us we must give account. No, it is regarded as omnipotent, and uncontrolable. The idea of asking, in regard to the object of attachment, whether he be worthy or not, whether our attachment itself be proper or not, when one has fallen in love, would be regarded, by a novel reading young lady, as the very height of absurdity. In this way, reasonable, sensible, religious people sometimes, under the evil influence of this evil practice, become thorough fatalists

in the article of love. And that most holy of all earthly unions, that close and intimate relation, which more nearly and more permanently affects happiness and character than any other, is often formed without the least exercise of reason, judgement, or principle, but in blind subserviency to the passion of love.

I have thus enumerated some of the more prominent objections against novel reading, indiscriminate and excessive novel reading. They are that the representations, with which the mind is familiarized, are too highly colored, that they usually so hurry the mind along and so excite the feelings as to prevent thought and reflection upon what is read, that they excite a distaste for reading of a more serious and profitable character, that they blunt and deaden the finer sensibilities of our natures, and that they magnify into undue importance the passion of love and teach absurd and dangerous notions of its nature and influence and proper place among the principles of our nature.

But, here you will ask, if I intend to object

to the reading of all fictitious writings? By no means. The expressions I have used, have been the indiscriminate and excessive reading of novels. But I would, if possible, point out a distinction between fictitious writings, which are profitable and those which are not so. And here I go back to the parables of our Savior for the distinction which I would notice. Our Savior spake in parables. What were these parables? They were scenes and stories, pictured forth in the imagination, for the purpose of illustrating moral truth. But the purpose is kept distinctly in view. You see that the moral truth, which he would illustrate, is the object upon which his mind's eye is fixed. Nay more, you perceive that the object, for which he is laboring is to present that moral truth more vividly to the minds of his hearers. The parables, therefore, are not true as stories, but the instruction conveyed by them, is truth, real, valuable truth. As illustrations, they do represent the truth more clearly and vividly, than it could otherwise have been done. Now there may be, and there are, fictitious writ-

things, corresponding in some humble degree, with these parables. In reading even these, you may indeed be interested in the mere story. And you may so read as only to remember the story. But, if you exercise one moment's thought, you must see that the minds of the writers are fixed upon moral truth, and that the great object for which they are laboring, is to set that truth distinctly and vividly before the minds of the readers.

For this kind of fictitious writing there is a strong call, a deep foundation in our very nature. For instance, I wish to make you see and feel the value of christian faith. Suppose I tell you in set, formal, abstract terms, what it is and what are its effects. You may believe what I say, but you do not see it, and feel it. But, if I say here is a neighbor who is under the influence of this faith, and it has made him more upright in his dealings, more kind in his family, more devoted to all that is pure and good, that, in seasons of temptation it nerves him to withstand, that, when friends are taken in death he is calm and cheerful; suppose, I say, that I describe all this in

true colors, then you would not only believe, you would see, and feel and desire to possess it. Nay more, suppose that I state an abstract conclusion and state it in general terms, what process do you go through in order to verify the truth of my statement? Do you not by the power of imagination, bring up to your mind's eye the individual cases, from which the general rule was drawn, and go through all the steps and follow the process by which the conclusion is verified. That is in order to make the truth your own you must go through the process which, he who states the truth, has gone through. He has become acquainted with a certain class of facts, and, from these, he draws a general conclusion. To verify that conclusion, and make it your own, you must, by the power of imagination, summon up a similar class of facts and trace the steps by means of which the conclusion was formed. There is then a call in nature for the exercise of the imagination in supporting cases for the illustration of abstract truths.

But I consider this class of fictitious wri-

things as entirely and widely separated from another and a much larger class. A class where the imagination of the writer is suffered to run wild, where the great object is to excite deep, thrilling interest in the plot, while there is manifest no distinct and visible moral truth as the object to be set forth and illustrated. While the former class may be read with profit, if read with care and reflection, the latter unfits the mind for all serious thought, all self sacrificing devotion to duty.

And finally, I would say, when you read fictitious writings, even of the better class, watch carefully their influence upon your own mind. If they awaken a more earnest desire for improvement, and you leave them with a more earnest devotion to a right performance of all the duties of life, then may you hope they have been useful and profitable. But when they excite only thrilling emotions, which render the details of duty dry and dull, then may you doubt as to their influence, then may you pause and hesitate in your devotion to them. Thus much upon novel reading. I have spoken plainly and more at length than

I should have done, had I not known how fascinating are these works, and how prone young ladies are to seek in them only for the passive luxury of excited feelings. I would then most earnestly warn you, my young friends, against these enticing but dangerous hinderances to your intellectual and moral improvement.

But, you will remember the general principle upon which I am speaking, that your profit from reading will depend not upon the amount of what you read but upon the character of what you read. Besides novels, there is a vast amount of other light reading against which you should ever be on your guard. In reviews, and especially in those periodicals designed expressly for ladies, there is much of this light reading, which, though pleasant for the time, unfit the mind for serious studies, and for grappling successfully with the duties and trials of life. These may be occasionally read for recreation. But the great body of your reading should be of a serious and a solid character, works which may excite thought and awaken reflection. I have not here time

to point out the books which may be most profitably read, nor would this be well. For minds are differently constituted, so that books, which may be more profitable to one would be less profitable to another.

But I cannot refrain from naming one book, which, if read aright, must be read with profit by all. I refer to the sacred Scriptures. This book contains a great variety—history, poetry and perceptive instructions. It relates to high and holy subjects. It teaches us concerning God, a holy and improving object of thought, concerning our Savior, a perfect example of what all should strive to become. It lays open to us our own natures, teaches us what we are, what we are capable of becoming, and what we are required to be.

How vast the subjects of thought and reflection laid open to view in this Holy volume; how extensive and various the range, and how well adapted to all the changing circumstances of our condition. Are you in prosperity? Here are subjects of thought adapted to this state. Are you in affliction? Here are hopes and promises, which are adapted, if made the

subjects of thought and reflection, to soothe the afflicted soul. And so of every circumstance, condition and relation in life.

But the rule I have laid down in regard to profitable reading, is peculiarly applicable to this most sacred of books, it should be read with much thought and reflection, with much self-examination and self application. You read the expression, '*God is love.*' It is but a short and simple sentence. But what untold depths of meaning are hidden under these few words, *God is love.* A condensed description of his whole character and his whole government. You may read it hastily and not be profited. You may make it the theme of thought and reflection for years, and connect with it all your observations of God's dealings in the works and laws of nature, and in the events of his providence, and the more you think, reflect and enquire, the more will the meaning of this simple sentence be unfolded to your minds. And there will be continually rising up some new view to enrich your hearts, to enlarge your minds, and to fill your souls with all that is great and ennobling.

Would you then secure intellectual improvement, would you render your judgment correct and sober, would you gain clear and correct notions of man, of yourselves, of human nature and human duties and human destiny? Make the Bible the volume of your daily perusal. I have been surprised to find, as I have conversed with others, with those who have enjoyed but few privileges for intellectual improvement, and have read but little, I have been surprised to find how well developed were their minds, how much strengthened and improved their mental powers, how well regulated their imaginations, how sober their views, and how natural and correct their judgments. I have asked for the reasons. I have found them to be readers of the Bible, persons, who read slowly indeed, but reflect much upon what they read. If then you have no fondness for the reading of the Bible, you have no reason to suspect the purity and correctness of your taste, you have reason to fear, either that your heart, your affections or your moral feelings are not what they should be. And should you find that novels and